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Cette conférence a voulu poursuivre le dialogue sur l'alphabétisation au-delà de l'année internationale de 1990 et réévaluer les initiatives mises de l'avant en 1990. Elle a porté plus particulièrement sur l'alphabétisation en regard du multiculturalisme. Elle présente les principales contributions regroupées autour de sept thèmes majeurs comme: l'alphabétisation et le marché du travail, l'alphabétisation multiculturelle qui favorise la pensée critique, l'alphabétisation des autochtones et des communautés culturelles, l'alphabétisation et la satisfaction des besoins communautaires et de santé, l'alphabétisation et les médias, l'alphabétisation et la science et la technologie, l'alphabétisation et les droits de la personne.

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DIMENSIONS OF LITERACY IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS 1992

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Dimensions of Literacy in a Multicultural Society

Conference Proceedings 1992

Edited by
Riva Heft
Department of Education

Olivia Rovinescu
Lacolle Centre for Educational Innovation

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IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Proceedings from the 1992 Conference

edited by

Riva Heft
Adult Education Program

Olivia Rovinescu
Lacolle Centre for Educational Innovation

Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

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DIMENSIONS OF LITERACY
IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

CONFERENCE 1992 PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Democracy and the freedom it provides are rooted in literacy and depend to a large extent on the capacity of ordinary citizen, including immigrants, to participate in the workings of their society. Access to services which facilitate literacy can be an instrumental factor in enabling people to participate in decision-making at various levels concerning issues affecting their lives. This entails having the ability not only to read and write but to think critically about that which is read and written. Access to opportunities to become literate unfortunately appears to be distributed unequally according to social class, race and gender.

Being literate in the sense used here means learning how to inquire, how to approach social problems, how to evaluate information critically and make wise judgements. The definition encompasses knowing how to make informed and effective choices about the worlds of work, politics, science and culture. Traditionally, literacy means the ability to read and write. However, the literacy required in a rapidly changing technological world is considerably mor complex and extensive. Literacy today is multifaceted. The literate person needs to develop:

1. the ability to "read," to evaluate and to manage information from a variety of sources, including print, television, computers, the arts, etc.;
2. the ability to express information, ideas and emotions in a variety of forms;
3. an understanding of how reality is constructed in very text (print or otherwise) and an understanding of the role of each other's own reality construct on the interpretation of that "text;"
4. a sensitive, reflective appreciation of the legacy of our cultural heritages and a conscious awareness of the way that the socio-cultural environment shapes our understanding of what we perceive;

5. an awareness of thinking and learning processes, one's own and those of others.

The literate person is empowered by the ability to think critically and to communicate effectively, and is able to use his/her expanded understanding of the world to enhance his/her relationships.

Major issues related to the environment and health, the impact of science and technology on basic cultural values, social implications of major economic changes and changes in the workplace and education for responsible citizenship, cut across disciplinary imperatives. These issues are directly related to the ability to read, write, think critically, to inquire, to approach social problems and evaluate information critically, to make wise judgements and have the potential to enhance the quality of life.

In the field of education today, nationally and internationally, in developed countries and in developing countries, literacy is the focus of much attention. It extends beyond the UNESCO theme year of 1990 and by underwriting this conference, Concordia University, the City of Montréal, the Corporation des Célébrations du 350ième anniversaire de Montréal 1642-1992 and the Ministry of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, assumed a proactive role as a link in the chain of international cooperation to help to promote awareness of this multi-dimensional social issue. The conference was instrumental in extending the dialogue on literacy and in re-evaluating the initiatives begun in 1990.

We were please that, as part of the conference, we hosted a consultation on literacy in the native and cultural communities. This consultation process brought together representatives of the various native and cultural communities to articulate their concerns and needs regarding literacy. We are delighted that representatives from the native and cultural communities took part in the conference and enriched our experience. As members of the Montreal community and Concordia University, we were honoured to have been able to provide a forum for these deliberations.

The Proceedings are organized among the theme areas of the conference; preceded by the keynote addresses and concluding with a report of the consultation activity. Papers were selected on the basis of being representative of the format, structure and content of the conference.

We would like to thank all our sponsors for their generous support in providing the resources to make this conference possible. We would also like to acknowledge the dedication, expertise and tireless efforts of the organizing committee. We are satisfied that the effort to mount this event was a worthwhile use of our personal, professional and financial resources. We particularly wish to thank Marion Daigle, Bill Gilsdorf, Ricki Goldstein, Beth Morey, Corinne Jetté, Cathy Mullen, Ann Gauvin, Leona Grisé, Shirley Sarna, Linda Shohat and Paul Nadeau. Our special thanks to Dr. Patrick Kenniff, Rector of Concordia University, and Madame Lynne Lalonde, Programme Office, Literacy Secretariat, Ministry of Multiculturalism and Citizenship. And finally, we would like to extend our thanks to Diane Moffat (Lacolle Centre for Educational Innovation) and Harold Spanier (The Nomad Scientists) for their time, energy and expertise in producing the conference proceedings booklet.

Riva Heft, Olivia Rovinescu

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THE PLENARIES

LITERACY: AFFIRMATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Dr. Glenda Simms
President, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Thank you very much. It is always a pleasure to come to Montreal. I would like to thank the organizers of this conference "Dimensions of Literacy in a Multicultural Society" for inviting me to speak to you this morning. I know it is always very difficult to come to grips with this whole idea of a multicultural society, even though Canada has been a multicultural society for the past 125 years. As a matter of fact, it has been a multicultural society ever since the Europeans came to these shores and, perhaps, even before.

What we do know though, is that Canada is changing very dramatically and very rapidly. Yesterday I spoke to 500 teachers in the York region of Ontario. They told me that they had schools in which they had one third, one third, one third. So I asked, "What are all these thirds?" It means that they are one third Blacks, one third Asians and one third others, including Whites. In other words, we have schools now in which Whites are the minority. They are finding it very difficult. I'm not sure why they are finding it difficult, because I thought they should be happy to have children in their classes. After all, they would have empty classes if immigrants weren't around. They wouldn't have any jobs! I don't know what they're complaining about. So I challenged them to get out on with the business of educating these kids and stop thinking about whether or not they came here recently or they came here a long time ago.

I think it is very significant that this conference on literacy is billed as part of the 350th anniversary celebration of the city of Montreal. A couple of years ago, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women held a symposium on poverty in Montreal. We came to Montreal because, as many of you might know, Montreal is the headquarters of poverty in Canada. This city has the largest percentage of poverty of all urban centres in the country. Therefore, it is appropriate that we are talking about this because there is a connection between poverty and literacy in terms of the day-to-day Canadian society. There are generations of Canadians who live here or were born here, who live on farms or in rural areas, and are still illiterate.

When we talk about illiteracy, it's not exclusively the problem of the immigrants. It is the problem of all of us in Canadian society. I would also like to point out that illiteracy is a moving target. Some of you in this room are illiterate. I, also, am illiterate in computers. I do not have computer literacy. So I guess I should feel very inferior to those of you who understand the machine. But I don't feel inferior because I know I can get somebody to do my computer work, and that's all right. I am giving jobs to those who are computer literate. The whole idea of literacy as a moving target is filled with emotion and ideological content. In the real sense, what we are talking about is how to get people to learn to read and write and take control of their lives.

So we ask, "What is the role of literacy in any modern society?" I think the co-chairs of this conference summed it up very well in the literature. I read something that says:

> Democracy and the freedom it provides are rooted in literacy and depend to a large extent on the capacity of ordinary citizens, including new immigrants, to participate in the workings of their society.

That is an interesting statement. On October 26th (in the Charlottetown Accord referendum), we are going to exercise our freedom to live in democracy, but I'm not sure that everybody understands what they are going to vote on. Therefore, I'm not quite sure that democracy and freedom are rooted in literacy. They are probably rooted in what we believe and who is the fastest talker. Again, we have this problem with the definition of literacy. However, I believe that Brazilian theorist, Paolo Freire, a guru of the literacy movement, takes the importance of literacy in our contemporary society a little further than what we believe when he states that:

> the power to transform the world comes from being literate; that is the motivation for learning to read and write.

So reading and writing aren't unusual things. We must be motivated and know what we want to do. Nova Scotian, African Baptist minister, Adam S. Green, in a poem, stated:

a bookless life's a life of death:
'Tis not true life, but only breath!

This is also an interesting statement, coming from the descendant of a slave. In whatever way we view literacy, and in whatever way we define literacy, we know that it is our capacity to participate, and our power to transform our society, and our ability to utilize the choices that we have among us. It is fundamental to being free in a free society. As a woman and as a minority, I feel very strongly about this. It is not just being able to read and write. It is being able to use the contents of what I read and write to liberate myself from the oppression around me.

I think that there are so many of us in this society who feel inadequate and powerless because of the values that are placed on the skills we have. We know we live in a society that really prides itself in the fact that it is literate. The kinds of people we really like in this society are the people with education and credentials and degrees and titles behind their names, and sometimes in front of their names. I like to say in front because we still prefer women who have "Mrs." in front of their names. That's what Dan Quayle said when he picked on Murphy Brown, even though she's a fictional character. He would have liked her to have "Mrs." in front of her name.

We know we value these kinds of things. We also like people who have social status. We like people who enjoy the economic benefits of good jobs. In order to get these good jobs, one has to be able to read and write. Then the question arises about how one gets to these levels of literacy.

On the flight to Montreal, I was reading a book by Patricia Williams, a black lawyer in the United States. She wrote an excellent book called, *The Alchemy of Rights and Race*, wherein she discusses who is qualified in our society, and how we come to the idea that people are qualified, and how we arrive at the decision that someone is more qualified than someone else. When you listen to her arguments, you know that we are in a society where "being qualified" really doesn't have much meaning. We must understand the social context in which people decide who is qualified and who is not.

She also wrote about the backlash against employment equity, and the argument that now that we are hiring women and minorities, we are disadvantaging other people-- the whole argument that in order to achieve employment equity, we will create reverse discrimination, and we will keep out these very literate qualified white men. Isn't that what we are saying? That "*they* are going to be the endangered species, because we are pushing these minorities, these women and these disabled people. Maybe we will lower our standards and, oh my Goodness, what will happen to this great country if we lower the standards?'

I took this very seriously and looked at this whole argument of reverse discrimination, and I did a little reality check. I wanted to find out if white men were being disadvantaged through the measures that we are putting in place because I have such great compassion for all people, including white men! I checked with the House of Commons; I looked at the Senate, I looked at the rulership within universities and banks and all the major institutions in this country; and, I can assure white men, they are not an endangered specie!

So now that we have established that fact, will you please stop talking about reverse discrimination and get on with equity? Let's get on with equity in all aspects of our society and at all levels because we know we are not disadvantaging anyone. We are asking for equity for all, and literacy has a role in this. Saying that you are disadvantaging others means that you are hiring illiterate people and discarding those very literate people who have the right to get the jobs. And then we ask, "How did they become literate? What is the value placed on them? What is the content of that literacy that we so value?

During a visit to a school in York region, I listened to a group of young students. One, named Justice, a young African student, was telling 500 teachers how he experienced life in Canadian schools. His parents came as immigrants from Ghana but he was born in Canada. Even though he was born in Canada, he was still referred to as an immigrant. When teachers talk about immigrant children, they are looking for children of colour. So the whole issue of who's an immigrant has taken on a tinge, even though we know immigrants come in all colours.

All of you sitting in this room, except those who are Aboriginal, were descended from an immigrant. We know that. But even so, in our contemporary society, the word "immigrant" has taken on colour and shape. The word "multicultural" has also taken on colour and shape. What have your teachers said? Teachers have said to me, "I do not have any multicultural children in my school." To which I replied, "Oh, don't you? So what kind do you have?" They said, "We have only white students." Now this is an insult to white people. It means that they have no culture! It means that the Ukrainian child and the Polish child and the German child and the Scottish child have no culture! They are just a mass of ordinary white folks. We take away their culture in order to give privilege to whiteness.

In a real way, in order to give a special privilege, you take away from them something that is authentic. You tell them they're not multicultural. So you've given the label "multicultural" to other children. You give it to the ones, especially the Italians, who are a bit darker than the light-skinned ones. You give it to the Jews, especially those who are darker than others. And, of course, the Blacks are always multicultural. They cannot escape the multicultural label. Nor can the Asians and all the other "multicultural" children. When you explain to teachers we always have multicultural children with us, they reply, "which children are we talking about? Are we talking about Chinese children, of children of Chinese origin? Why do we call them immigrant children? Are they really immigrant children? Are they first-generation immigrants? Or what? What are we really talking about?"

My children object to being called immigrants. I don't mind being called an immigrant because I came here on an airplane. They hate being called immigrants and they let me know that they are not immigrants. They also told me that they are not Jamaicans. They said,"Mom, you're Jamaican. We like going to Jamaica, but we are Canadians." And they are. They are! That's one of the things that we have to talk about even before we talk about how to be literate in an multicultural society.

I want you to come to grips with what we are talking about, the labels that have developed, and what little Justice said. Justice said, "When I went to Grades 2 and 3, I felt horrible. They called me names. They called me nigger. They asked me where I came from. They asked me if I lived in trees." He said, "When I came to you and complained that I was unhappy with the name-calling, you, my Grade 2 teacher, told me to ignore it. Then I moved to Grade 3 and the same thing happened, and I came to you, my grade 3 teacher, and you told me that I should not tackle it." He said (and this is very serious), "If the child had hit me and if I had hit him back, you would have done something about it. So, I decided that I would start fighting, and that's the only time you paid attention to me."

Today we are talking about violence in our classrooms. Our students are becoming more and more violent. Teachers are afraid of them. What I'm saying is that in our effort to make them literate, we have also taught them to be violent because we did not listen to their words. We did not listen when they told us that they were hurting. We helped them not to be literate because we cut off their voices. We did not allow them to speak. We are very much like the parents who said "Children are to be seen and not heard."

In fact, if we are to have a literate society, we must have a society that allows people to speak out, because speaking is very important to literacy. Reading is merely a second string in the whole process. The most important part of literacy is the ability to speak. When one is able to speak and express one's self, then the written word merely becomes a reflection of the spoken word. That's what it is. It isn't the other way around. We, in our society, think it is the other way around, so we haven't allowed people to speak out. We must allow these children to speak out and if they speak neither English nor French, we have to find a way for them to speak out in their own language. We have to find a way to validate that language while we teach them English or French. I feel very, very strongly and very passionately about this.

I grew up in a society in which I did not speak English. I spoke Jamaican Creole. Many of the children today in our classrooms are of Jamaican parentage. It bothers me when I hear that it is because they speak Creole that they cannot speak English or French. This is not true. It is just that teachers do not know how to teach. They have never taken the time out to listen to them and to understand what they are saying. It was very important to me to speak my Creole at home. When I went to school, I spoke English. Sometimes I really wanted to leave school early in the afternoon so I could practice my Creole, because it was in the Creole that I found my emotional root. I had no problem with English! I spoke it. I mean, the teacher taught me! We knew the difference between the home language and the school language. What is so difficult? It is the simplest thing to do. Any child who was born and raised in this way will tell you that. So, I spoke Creole at home and I spoke English at school.

The majority of kids in my age group were exposed to English. It was wonderful to write essays. We learned how to write the introduction, the body and the conclusion. By the time you got to the 6th Grade, we had to be able to write a good essay. Two of the topics stand out for me from those early days. We could choose between writing an essay on "Honesty is the Best Policy," or "She Sits Like Patience on a Monument Smiling at Grief!"

I chose "She Sits Like Patience on a Monument Smiling at Grief" because that reminded me of my teacher. She looked like patience sitting on a monument smiling at my grief. That was my experience. Most people who have gone through a colonial education can relate to that. However, the content and the concepts were foreign to us. We talked about the "cobblestones of Britain." We walked, "stubbing our toes on the cobblestones." We didn't know exactly what we were talking about. We would have had to go to London to understand what we were talking about in Grade 1!

I wonder now about the link between my colonial education and the reality of Black life in Nova Scotia. Last week I went to Nova Scotia and went into East Preston where the black people live. As one drives into East Preston, the first thing that one observes is that the paved sidewalk stops as soon as one enter the black community. Then I remembered working on First Nations' reserves all over Canada, and the distinctive feature about an Indian reserves is that the pavement stops as soon as you enter, whether it's in Quebec or any other province. So maybe that's what the cobblestones are about--the pavement stops when you enter.

Now that we have entered Canada, we allegedly have created a new multicultural society. All of a sudden people do not understand what we are talking about. They have no methods of educating us. Yet, they were able to educate Ukrainian children and the German children and the Italian children and all those new early immigrants who came. So what is the problem today?

I am stating that we have to change our whole attitude towards what lies ahead of us, whether we are dealing with children or adults. We have to change the hierarchies and we have to fuel popular literacy with an understanding so that people understand the whole history of literacy is rooted in class and privilege. Remember also, that in the Middle Ages only a few priests and a limited number of scholars attached to the Royal Courts were literate. So the move toward literacy as a popular value was a very slow one.

In addition to all these limitations of class in the past, we must also realize that our society has had a relatively short history of literacy as we know it in the Western world. We have to think about the development of paper, the development of the printing machine and printing mills. We have to talk about work and the industrialization of our society, and the fact that we now have to go into factories and we have to read signs. That is why there is an urgent need for greater levels of literacy.

We recognize that literacy is merely a tool to adapt to our society. If we see this, then we will not have all these hang-ups. All of us need to be able to read and to write in order to adapt to a modern society, in order to enjoy leadership, and in order to critically analyze the messages that are impacting on us daily. I think if we understand this background transfer, we will recognize that literacy is important in affirming and empowering people. If we believe that democracy is rooted in literacy, then we must believe that literacy will enable us to more fully understand democratic ideas and concepts, and enable us to put them into for the benefit of society and to the individual. As Cesar Chavez of the International Farmworker's Union has said,

> It is hard to deprive workers of their rights
> when they are literate.

We know that literacy has always been seen as the vehicle of human liberation. No one knew the power of literacy more than the slave masters during the slave era in North American society. They realized that the only way to keep black people enslaved was to keep them illiterate. That was the reason they would not allow them to learn to read and that is why they did not establish schools for slaves. They kept them away from reading, but some learned to read, and many of them used the ideas that they found in books to try to liberate themselves. That's why the Church is so strong in the black community. I have a lot of ambivalence about the role of the Church in the liberation of any group of people. However, I think it is very fortunate that at least they learned to read the Bible. The masters didn't mind if they read the Bible because they thought it would help them to be "good people." "Good" people meaning they would be obedient.

So, in that sense, we know that literacy has always been the peak of enlightenment. I think that's what we are grappling with today. How do we deal with the high level of illiteracy in our country? How do we deal with the children who are not learning to read? How do we deal with the fact that universities are carrying out tests to prove that the people who come to them can read? That's almost a joke. By the time you get to university, why should the university test your reading skills or your literacy skills? But, we know they have to do that. They cannot take anything for granted.

We know that many immigrants are in a very difficult situation because they can speak neither English nor French. Many of them are literate in their first language, but that literacy does not necessarily assist them in fitting into Canadian society. We see another problem among the refugees, people who have come from societies where they were also illiterate in their own language. This poses a particular problem for that segment of our society. Those who go through the immigrant experience and are not literate in their native languages, have additional problems adjusting to Canadian society.

The women in these groups are particularly vulnerable. I think that we cannot deal with literacy until we take a serious look at literacy for women. In fact, if we do not make women literate, we are not going to deal with the inequities within our society. When these women are locked away in their homes, or locked away in the ethnic enclaves of their communities, they find this very oppressive. I know that some people are very uptight when they talk about this, but I do not believe our cultures are necessarily static. I do not believe that everything that is done in the name of culture should be appreciated or tolerated. I think that cultures are "man-made" therefore we must re-examine them. There are many cultural practices that are dysfunctional, and I do not subscribe to the preservation of cultural practices that are dysfunctional and discriminatory. So, when people come into Canada, I think we have a major challenge of maintaining multiculturalism.

It is a difficult problem because we say we are a multicultural society, therefore it is assumed that we respect different cultures. However we do not respect all aspects of all cultures, just as we do not respect all aspects of Canadian culture. In Canadian society, one in ten women is beaten in the privacy of her own home; one in four little girls is sexually abused before she reaches the age of ten. So by the same token, we do not respect certain cultural practices that are brought here by groups from outside the country.

Women say, "Let us be literate, but give us a program that has the content to liberate us from our oppression." If we are developing a program of literacy for these women, we have to recognize that the content has to be important. One of the frustrating things about most of these programs is that they tend to go into what people already know. For instance, in a supermarket people might need to say, "this is an apple or this is a pear," but they also need to know how to recognize that they are being gouged by this grocery chain or the other chain. They need to be able to decide how to access the cheapest pears and apples. We need to develop that kind of understanding. If this apple is in downtown Regina, for example, it is more expensive than if it is in the suburbs. In Regina, where people cannot move, where they have no transportation, the cost is more expensive than in the suburbs. Not only that, they are not the same quality. So you must let them see that what is happening to them is not right. The content of the programs must be looked at. We must find the tools that can liberate the people that we are trying to make literate.

We wonder about individuals in the immigrant community. For instance, recently the *Winnipeg Free Press* highlighted the plight of an Iraqi anaesthesiologist who had a successful practice in Kuwait City. To practice here as a doctor, she would have to repeat years of study and training which she cannot afford. So instead she applied for a job as a janitor and was told she was "overqualified." She was hired for another cleaning job after she left her post secondary qualifications off her resume. In other words, if she indicates on her resume that she is a doctor, she doesn't qualify; if she leaves it off, she qualifies. That's the kind of shadow game that we play! Of course, her application for a clerical job was rejected because she had no Canadian experience. So, the questions in my mind are: Is this doctor functionally illiterate? Where does she fit on your scale? What kind of programs would you develop for her? Would you help her to be a good janitor, or would you help her develop the skills to obtain accreditation for her degrees? Would you help her to talk to the medical associations? How would you deal with this person you're helping to be literate?

In fact, society has not only branded her illiterate but it has de-skilled her and society cannot offer her jobs for which she has no skills. Not only has her ability to make a good living been taken away, but a situation has been created whereby her self-concept is eroded. I think it is difficult to go from being a doctor to being a janitor. I have nothing against being a janitor, however, you can imagine, that in terms of social hierarchy, the kind of damage that it does to people whose credentials are not accepted in Canadian society. Again you must deal with this kind of issue when you are talking about illiteracy.

Literacy is not neutral. You have to think about the social and political dimensions and you have to think of the psychological dimensions of people's lives. Think of them as individuals and see how the whole society impacts on them--on their total being. That's the only way you are going to help them to be literate. That's the only way you are going to help them to have the will to learn to read the things that you think they should be able to learn to read.

We have a very difficult situation. Literacy operates on a number of levels. Once you put up a psychological block, it's very difficult to learn something. That's what we found in the early days of bilingualism. In Western Canada, for instance, there was resistance to learning French. Psychologists did a lot of studies and found that it wasn't because people couldn't learn the language, it was because they had built a psychological block. By the same token, the immigrant will find it difficult to learn if all the psychological blocks are there. If we, in our system, render a person immobile both politically and socially, and also de-skill that person, then we make that person feel inferior.

We also have to deal with the whole issue of racism. I always leave that for last, because Canadian society is one in which it is not polite to talk about racism. Canadians do not like to be called racist. I'll never forget when I became President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I was interviewed by every newspaper in this country, not because they wanted to know if I knew anything about political issues, but instead, how a Black woman could be President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. In other words, how can she represent all women?. The journalists came to my office. They wanted to know what I thought of Canadian society. In response to the questions they asked, I said that I believe that Canadian society is a racist society because of X, Y and Z and it's also a sexist society because of X, Y and Z. Of course, the headlines didn't say *Simms* *says Canadian Society is Sexist*, the headlines were *Simms says Canadian Society is Racist*.

I met a young Black man who attends the University of Ottawa law school. When we met he said, "I wanted to meet you because I was in a class at York University where they quoted you from the newspaper because we were dealing with race relations. You said Canadian society is racist. He said that the discussion that went on in class was very interesting. Students were saying, "Who is she to call us racist? If she doesn't like this society, why doesn't she go back to where she came from?" Some of the women said, "She's so lucky; she's not representing all Canadian women. Who is she to be calling us racist when she's there in bed with the government, eating at the trough? Who is she to challenge us? After all, she's probably an immigrant!" It is very interesting-- and I'm saying this very publicly--racism was at the root of the response.

I noticed the deliberation of another woman leader, Judy Rebick. When Judy Rebick said that we were going to do something about this country, they wrote a nice profile of her. That was the only time that I'd heard that Judy was an immigrant from the United States. Well, no one has ever told her that she couldn't speak out for women because she is an immigrant. Well, they told me that!

So, you see, we must understand how we see people in this society, and recognize that if we are going to make people literate, we must talk about racism within Canadian society. Otherwise, we will not be able to reach the ones who are suffering because of it. These people live their lives in a particular way, on the periphery of society, whether they are Aboriginal or Black or Asian, or any of the other so called visible minorities. They live on the fringes of society even when they try to enter the mainstream with all the skills required. You could be as literate as Saint Paul or Saint John or Saint Matthew-- Christians who wrote those stories that we now believe. Even if you are as literate as those people, or even more literate, you will not be accepted if you are not seen as the right kind of person.

Therefore, literacy is not necessarily the answer to our dilemma. Even though we can read and write, as minorities in this society, it doesn't mean that we are accepted. When I say to Blacks, "we've got to be educated," I have to tell them more than that or they will not believe me. They know educated Black people who cannot get jobs, and who are not valued. That is why we have a major task in dealing with this issue.

We also have a major task in dealing with sexism. To enable young women to be truly literate in this society, literacy for women must be more than reading and writing. It is the development of critical skills which allow them to recognize how the images impact on them as women and how these images can negate their being. For too long we have been carrying on as if everything is alright. We've said, "You have come a long way, baby." Today, we know that as Canadian women we have made some steps forward, but we have not come a very long way. The majority of Canadian women are still poor, undereducated, miseducated, and on the fringes of the society.

We recently held a symposium in Ottawa for young women. They talked about the media. They talked about images like that of Marilyn Munroe; they talked about bulimia and anorexia and all the things that are bombarding them. Far too often we see people manufacturing images. I'm so sick and tired of Marilyn Monroe. From time to time they resurrect her and push her on us. I wish they would just let the woman rest in peace. The more they bombard us with this image, the more young Canadian women think they have to be Marilyn Monroe. They all go out looking for society's manufactured image of what it is to be beautiful and to be female. But even with all the *Miss Clairol*, they are still not satisfied with an approximation of Marilyn Monroe. If you think it is hard on little White girls, just think about little Black girls! No wonder you see some of them walking down Ste. Catherine Street with blond wigs.

We know that all this is bombarding us. We as Canadians, men and women, must question what is it about our society that we must deal with when we educate people, when we raise their consciousness, when we debate, when we deliberate? How do we educate everyone? How do we all become literate? How do men become literate, for instance? How do we get them to break out of the shackles of patriarchy? We have begun to see some men moving along that continuum. We see younger men changing their attitudes. We wonder why older women like younger men! It's because they're different. They're not like the men of our age! It's a simple thing. But we also see young men struggling and grappling too. We know that while we have said to the young women, "feel good about yourself," we have not done enough for young men. We have not helped them to be reborn.

Therefore, in our own process of literacy, we must do gender analysis, race analysis, content analysis, and we have to think about our methodology. Methodology is very important. Some people like to learn in individualistic settings. Others like to learn in groups and to share. We must not deny many immigrants the cultural values of cooperation, even though they are coming into a capitalistic society in which we are very individualistic. Our schools are much too individualistic. We need to find a way of cooperating and sharing and making sure that people learn from each other, do that the teacher is not the only one with the information.

We need to say to Canadians, "Those who are literate need to work with those who are illiterate. Those who are old immigrants need to learn to work with those who are new immigrants. Whites, Blacks, Asians and Aboriginal people need to learn to work together. The only way we can work together is to deconstruct our ideas about each other. A good literacy program is a program that deconstructs the mythology we hold about each other. It is a program that reflects the best part of our contributions. It is a program that recognizes that we all have a history of contribution, and that we have all made this country what it is--for better or for worse--we have all contributed!

I took some pleasure recently when I read in the *Toronto Star* the result of a poll: Who is the typical Canadian? I was excited. The first thing it said was, "the typical Canadian is a woman." So I said, "yay yay yay!" Uh oh..... "she is white." Now then, where do I fit along this continuum? And then, "she is Roman Catholic." I'm so far from being a Roman Catholic that I just couldn't fit. Then I thought there must be something that can give me some feeling of belonging here. "When she eats out, she eats Chinese food!" I now know what immigrants are doing for this country--we are changing it in dramatic ways! "The typical Canadian eats Chinese food!" I'm fine with that. I'm happy! Even if she's a white woman, I'm happy because she eats Chinese food. We're making a little dent. Give us ten years and she'll be eating ackee and saltfish!

So, we will all discover that we have much in common. We can then develop a literacy program not just for adults, but for children and all our communities. Think about all these things and develop this program--men and women together. I think that's what we have to work towards. We need to find a way of working together and making sure we continue to liberate ourselves and this country from all systemic barriers: racism, sexism, homophobia, poverty, classism, and all the issues that keep us away from each other.

I'm going to leave with you the ideas of Agnes Macphail, one of our great Canadians. She said that we can have a better world. If we truly believe in that better world, it doesn't have to be a figment of our imagination. It can be a reality if you believe in it and if we put our hearts and our minds together and work together and believe that all the people of the world, all Adams and Eves, are good people. If we treat them well, they will treat us well also. It is towards this dream that we must all work because, in fact, inherent in each of us is the ability to revolutionize the world.

Thank you very much.

LITERACY, BORDER PEDAGOGY, AND MULTICULTURALISM IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE LOS ANGELES UPRISING

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I want to analyze in this talk some central questions relevant to the debate that is increasingly being waged around the relationship between literacy, multiculturalism, and difference, particularly in terms of what it means to address the needs of those groups who traditionally have been excluded within the dominant discourse of schooling. Taken up in these terms, literacy becomes an enabling condition for forms of citizenship in which members of dominant and subordinate groups are offered subject positions which address what it means to live in a society in which they have the opportunity to govern and shape history rather than be the subject or object of its oppressive and colonizing practices. The logic that informs my argument addresses literacy as a form of social criticism which is not only concerned with how social agents both write and are written by culture, but how they can change it. In this case, literacy becomes critical to the degree that it makes problematic the transcendent and universalizing claim of the unifying authoritative voice of the Eurocentric tradition, the structure and practice of representation, and the material legacy and concrete practice of neo-colonialism.

In this instance, literacy is not reduced to the practice of learning simply how to read, write, or develop aural skills. As part of a broader politics of difference, literacy also serves to focus attention on the importance of acknowledging that meaning is not fixed and that to be literate is to undertake a dialogue with the multiple languages, discourses and texts of others who speak from different histories, locations, and experiences. But as a discursive practice, literacy is about more than negotiating and translating the terrain of cultural and semiotic differences. It is also a rupturing practice that engages questions regarding who writes, speaks or produces for what audience, in what institutional setting, and with what purpose in mind. Literacy, in this case, becomes a form of border crossing that makes visible how oppressive and dominating practices mediate between the margins and centers of power. As an emancipatory practice. Literacy is not about merely comprehending otherness, but recognizing agency in others. Literacy re-presents the subject positions and social identities of "others" as part of a progressive matric of politics and practices aimed at the transformation of material relations of domination and the abolishment of oppressive regimes of signification.

Literacy as part of a broader politics of difference and democracy points, at the very least, to three important considerations. First, it makes visible the historically and socially constructed strengths and limitations of those places and borders we inherit and which encadre our discourses and social relations. Second, literacy is a form of ethical address that structures how we construct relationships between ourselves and others. It marks out the boundaries of difference and inscribes them in borders that "define the places that are safe and unsafe, [that] make visible the travel of teachers and students between different worlds. Borders signal in the metaphorical and literal sense how power is inscribed differently on the body, culture, history, space, land, and psyche. When literacy is defined in monolithic terms, from the center, within a linear logic that erases uncertainty, it only recognizes the borders of privilege and domination. Third, literacy calls into question those spaces and locations that intellectuals inhabit as they seek to secure authority through specific ways of reading or misreading their relationship with the world and others. Moreover, literacy raises here the responsibility of intellectuals in "recognizing those structures (social, cultural, and economic, and so forth) that both enable and constrain [their] activities."

The discourse of literacy cannot be abstracted from the language of difference and power. Hence, literacy cannot be viewed as merely an epistemological or procedural issue but must be defined primarily in political and ethical terms. It is political in that how we "read" the world is always implicated in relations of power. Literacy is ethical in that people "read" the world differently depending, for instance, on circumstances of class, gender, race, politics, and sexual orientation. They also read the world in spaces and social relationships constructed between themselves and others which demand actions based on judgements and choices about how one is to act in the face of ideologies, values, and experiences that constitute "otherness." It is these shifting relations of knowing and identity which frame our "different modes of response to the other (e.g. between those that transfigure and those that disfigure, those that care for the other in his/her otherness and those that do not)."

In what follows, I want to address how literacy as a form of social criticism can be used to address the issue of multiculturalism as a form of border pedagogy.

I want to begin by quoting two teachers, both of whom harbour strong feelings and passions about the issue of multiculturalism and race. The first quote is by the late James Baldwin, the renown Afro-American writer. The second quote recently appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and is by Melvin E. Bradford, a former speech writer for George Wallace and more recently an editorial writer working on behalf of Patrick Buchanan.

> If...one managed to change the curriculum in all the schools so that [Afro-Americans] learned more about themselves and their real contributions to this culture, you would be liberating not only [Afro-Americans], you'd be liberating white people who know nothing about their own history. And the reason is that if you are compelled to lie about one aspect of anybody's history, you must lie about it all. If you have to lie about my real role here, if you have to pretend that I hoed all that cotton just because I loved you, then you have done something to yourself. You are mad.

> I am not a scientific racist...But blacks as a group have been here a long time and, for some reason, making them full members of our society has proven almost impossible. They remain outside. The more privileges black Americans have had, the worse they seem to do. At the core of it is black private life -those things we can't legislate and can't control....I have a deep suspicion that in matters that affect the course of their lives, blacks habitually shoot themselves in the foot.

What these quotes suggest in the most benign sense is that issues concerning multiculturalism, literacy, and race do not allow for a comfortable single reading. A less sanguine analysis reveals what both of these quotes share but only Baldwin is willing to name: that multiculturalism is not only about the discourse of alleged others but is also fundamentally about the issue of whiteness as a mark of racial and gender privilege. For example, Bradford's discourse exemplifies how the attack on multiculturalism has become a coded legitimation for the equating of racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity with social chaos, the lowering of standards, and the emergence of a new tribalism that threatens the boundaries of an alleged common culture or national identity. On the other hand, Baldwin argues that multiculturalism cannot be reduced to an exclusive otherness that references Afro-Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, or other suppressed minorities, as either a problem to be resolved through the call for benevolent assimilation or as a threat to be policed and eliminated. For Baldwin, multiculturalism is primarily about whiteness and its claims to a self definition that excludes itself from the complex relations of race, ethnicity, power and identity. What both of these positions highlight in the multicultural debate are the ways in which multiculturalism has been used either to defend or critique the racial economies of privilege and power work in the larger society.

I want to argue that in the aftermath of the L. A. uprising those of us concerned about literacy need to rethink the politics of multiculturalism as part of a broader attempt to understand how issues regarding national identity, culture, and patriotism can be rewritten in order to enable dominant groups to examine, acknowledge, and unlearn their own privilege. To see most racism, for example, not as an issue of black lawlessness but as an expression of white 'supremacy.' More specifically, a critical multiculturalism and its attendant view of literacy must shift attention away from an exclusive focus on subordinate groups, especially since such an approach tends to highlight their deficits, to one which examines how racism in its various forms is produced historically, semiotically, and institutionally at various levels of society. In opposition to a quaint liberalism, multiculturalism means more than analyzing stereotypes, more fundamentally it means understanding, engaging,and transforming the diverse institutions that produce racism and other forms of discrimination.

It is worth noting that in the aftermath of the recent Los Angeles uprising many educational commentators have ruled out any discussion of how different social groups are related to each other within networks of hierarchy and exploitation both in and out of the schools. This particular silence when coupled with popular perception that the L.A. uprising can be explained by pointing to those involved as simply thugs, looters, and criminals makes it clear why the multicultural peril is often seen as a black threat; it also suggests what such a belief shares with the traditionalists view of the "other" as a disruptive outsider. In this scenario, multiculturalism becomes the source of the problem.

In what follows, I want to address the necessity of creating a border pedagogy as a basis for a new language for thinking about the dynamics of critical literacy and the politics of multiculturalism, one that allows students and others to move between cultures, to travel within zones of cultural difference. Furthermore, such a language serves to challenge the boundaries of cultural and racial difference as sites of exclusion and discrimination while simultaneously rewriting the script of cultural difference as part of a broader attempt to provide new spaces for expanding and deepening the imperatives of a multicultural and multiracial democracy. In short, I want to address what it means to treat schools and other public sites as border institutions in which teachers, students and others learn to imagine otherwise in order to act otherwise. It is within such institutions, which in their decenteredness, daily acts of cultural translation and negotiation, that students and teachers produce new set of practices and visions for defining literacy in terms that weigh cultural differences against the implications they have for practices that disclose rather than mystify, democratize culture rather than shut it down, provide the conditions for all people to believe that they can take risks, and change existing power relations.

After the fires went out in Los Angeles, the Bush Administration once again reneged on its responsibility to address the problems and demands of democratic public life. In the face of escalating poverty, increasing racism, growing unemployment among minorities, and the failure of an expanding number of Americans to receive adequate health care or education, the Bush Administration invoked a wooden morality coupled with a disdain for public life by blaming the nation's ills on the legislation of the Great Society, TV sitcom characters such as Murphy Brown, or the alleged breakdown of family values. Within this scenario, poverty is caused by the poverty of values, racism is seen as a "black" problem (lawlessness), and social decay can be rectified by shoring up the family and the logic and social relations of the alleged free market.

The Bush Administration's response to the Los Angeles uprising exemplifies the failure of leadership characteristic of the Reagan/Bush eras. Abandoning its responsibility for political and moral leadership, the federal government has reduced its intervention in public life to waging war against Iraq, using taxpayer's money to bail out corrupt bankers, and slashing legislation that would benefit the poor, the homeless, and the disadvantaged. There is a tragic irony at work when a government can raise 500 billion dollars to bail out corrupt bankers and 50 billion to fight a war in Iraq (put in perspective the combined costs of these adventures exceeds the cost of WWII including veterans benefits) while at the same time the same government cuts back food stamp and school lunch programs in a country in which nearly one out of every four children under six live in poverty. But there is more at stake here than simply the failure of moral and political leadership. The breadth and depth of democratic relations are being rolled back at all levels of national and daily life in the U.S. For example, this is seen in the growing disparity between the rich and poor, the ongoing attacks by the government and courts on civil rights and the welfare system, and the proliferating incidents of racist harassment and violence on college and public school sites.

The retreat from democracy is also evident in the absence of serious talk about how as a nation we might educate existing and future generations of students in the literacies, languages and practices of moral compassion, critical agency, and public service. The discourse of leadership and literacy appears trapped in a vocabulary in which the estimate of a good society is expressed in indices that measure profit margins and the Dow Jones Average. Missing in this discourse is a vocabulary for talking about and creating democratic public cultures and communities of concern that offer diverse groups the opportunity to engage in moral dialogue, uncover patterns of systemic injustice, and organize against growing unemployment, declining quality of life, corporate crime, sexism, censorship, media manipulation, and the rampant individualism and greed that has become the hallmark of the last decade.

It is in the absence of a language that forcefully legitimates and creates the conditions for public spheres where the responsibility of critical citizenship and public responsibility are nurtured and generated that the current failure of leadership at the national level becomes most obvious; moreover, the absence of such leadership poses a serious threat to maintaining a popular perception of democracy as something that needs to be constantly struggled for in public arenas such as the schools, trade unions, and other sites which embody the promise of a multiracial, multicultural democracy.

This raises the question of what a politics of multiculturalism and literacy of a cultural politics suggest for redefining educational theory and practice as a form of border crossing? There are a number of theoretical considerations that need to be unpacked in reference to this question. The category of border signals in the metaphorical and literal sense how power is inscribed differently on the body, culture, history, space and psyche. How power works to privilege some bodies, some forms of cultural capital, some ways of speaking, acting, and being in the world. Borders point to various sites of crossing and separation, to locations that become hybridized through practices that move between acts of policing and relations of resistance. The concept of border, with and its associated range of signifiers such as borderland, border identities, border intellectual, and so on, when defined as part of a politics of cultural difference can be used pedagogically to call into question and unsettle the language of history, power, and difference. The category of border crossing signals forms of criticism in which existing borders forged in inequality, violence, and domination can be challenged and transformed. It also speaks to the need to create pedagogical conditions in which students become border crossers in order to move into different domains of knowledge to understand otherness in the specificity of its own terms, to engage critically the politics of their own location, and to further create borderlands in which diverse cultural resources allow for the fashioning of new identities capable of challenging existing configurations of power. In this sense, border crossing becomes a practice in which students and teachers cross over into different cultural zones, not merely to reconstruct the history of others, but also, as Abdul JanMohamed argues, to "map the politics of their forays into other cultures." This type of pedagogical cartography can illuminate and make problematic the historically and socially constructed strengths and limitations of those places and borders we inherit and which frame our discourses and social relations as intellectuals, students, and citizens.

If the concept of border pedagogy is to be linked to the imperatives of a critical democracy, as it must be, it is important that educators address what it means to rewrite culture as a vital source for developing a politics of identity, community and pedagogy. In this approach, culture cannot be viewed as monolithic or unchanging, as Bloom or Hirsch would have it, but as a site of multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages experiences, and voices intermingle amid diverse relations of power and privilege. It is important to note that critical educators cannot be content to merely map or name how ideologies are inscribed in the various social and cultural expressions of schooling, whether they be the curriculum, forms of school organization, or in teacher student relations. While these should be important concerns for critical educators, a more viable critical pedagogy needs to go beyond them by analyzing how ideologies are actually taken up in the contradictory voices and lived experiences of students as they give meaning to the dreams, desires, and subject positions that they inhabit.

In this sense, critical educators need to provide the conditions for students to speak differently so that their narratives can be affirmed and engaged critically along with the consistencies and contradictions that characterize such experiences. This suggests not only hearing the voices of those students who have been traditionally silenced, it means taking seriously what all students say by engaging the implications of their discourse in broader historical and relational terms. But equally important is the need to provide safe spaces for students to critically engage teachers, other students, as well as the limits of their own positions as border crossers who do not have to put their identities on trial each time they address social and political issues that they do not experience directly. Put simply, students must be given the opportunity to cross ideological and political borders as a way of furthering the limits of their own understanding in a setting that is pedagogically safe and socially nurturing rather than authoritarian and infused with the suffocating smugness of a certain political righteousness. More specifically, student experience has to be analyzed as part of a broader democratic politics of voice and difference.

As part of a discourse of literacy and difference, a theory of border pedagogy needs to address the important question of how images and practices that name, marginalize, and define difference as the devalued Other are actively learned, internalized, challenged, or transformed. That is, it is imperative that such a pedagogy acknowledge and critically analyzes how the colonizing of differences by dominant groups is expressed and sustained through all those aspects of schooling in which the humanity of the Others is either ideologically disparaged or ruthlessly denied. In addition, such a pedagogy needs to address how an understanding of these differences can be taken up in order to challenge the prevailing relations of power that sustain them. In this case, border pedagogy must provide the conditions for students to engage in cultural remapping as a form of resistance. Students should be given the opportunity to engage in systematic analyses of the ways in which the dominant culture creates borders saturated in terror, inequality, and forced exclusions. Students need to analyze the conditions that have disabled others to speak in the places where those who have power exercise authority. This suggests the need for critical educators to give more thought to how the experience of marginality at the level of everyday life lends itself productively to forms of oppositional and transformative consciousness. Similarly, there is a need for those designated as Others (the excluded and marginalized) to both reclaim and remake their histories, voices and visions as part of a wider struggle to change those material and social relations that deny radical pluralism as the basis of democratic political community.

By being able to listen critically to the voices of their students, teachers also become border crossers through the ability to make different narratives available to themselves and by legitimating difference as a basic condition for understanding the limits of their own knowledge. In this case, knowledge and power come together not to merely reaffirm or exoticize experience and difference but to open up these domains to broader theoretical considerations, to tease out their limitations, and to engage a vision of community in which diverse voices define themselves in terms of their distinct historical and social formations and broader collective hopes. For critical educators, this entails speaking to important social, political, and cultural issues from a deep sense of the politics of their own location and the necessity to engage and often unlearn the habits of institutional (as well as forms of racial, gender, and class specific) privilege that buttress their own power while sometimes preventing others from becoming questioning subjects. Hence, it is important that intellectuals address the politics of their own location by developing "a discourse that responds to the power relations of the world system, that is, to examine her [or her] location in the dynamics of centers and margins.... [and guard] against a form of theoretical tourism... where the margin becomes a linguistic or critical vacation, a new poetics of the exotic." This is not meant to suggest that as educators we should abandon our authority as much as we should transform it into an emancipatory practice that provides the conditions for us to speak and be taken seriously. Of course, as teachers we can never speak inclusively as the Other, though we may be the Other with respect to issues of race, class, or gender. But we can certainly work with diverse Others to deepen both our own and their understanding of the complexity of the traditions, histories, knowledge, and politics that all of us bring to the schools and other cultural sites. More specifically, while teachers and other cultural workers may not speak as Others whose experiences they do not share, or suggest that such Others have nothing to say, they certainly can speak about and to experiences of racism, sexism, class discrimination, and other concerns as historical and relational issues that deeply affect and connect various dominant and subordinate groups through the interlocking dynamics of privilege, subordination,and oppression.

In other words, as a heterosexual, white/middle/working class educator, I cannot speak as or for Afro-Americans. But I can speak self-reflectively from the politics of my own location about the issues of racism as an ethical, political, and public issue. This is not meant to suggest that all those who inhabit public life are equally compliant with the ideologies and social relations that construct such forms of domination. The latter is simply a paralysing form of pluralism that makes everyone a victim while simultaneously ignoring issues of political and social accountability. More to the point is the necessity for cultural workers to recognize that all forms of oppression have to be addressed both within and outside of the parameters of their specific focus. That is, such issues have to be addressed as both ideologically specific and public problems that affect both particular individuals and groups and the overall moral and political quality of democratic public life.

If a politics of cultural difference is to be fashioned as an emancipatory rather than oppressive practice, literacy must be rewritten in terms that articulate difference with the principles of equality, justice,'and freedom rather than with those interests supportive of hierarchies, oppression, and exploitation. In this case, literacy as an emancipatory practice requires people to write, speak and listen in the language of difference, a language in which meaning becomes multiaccentual, dispersed, and resists permanent closure. This is a language in which one speaks with rather than for others, and has serious implications not only for students but also for teachers and other cultural workers, particularly around the issue of authority, pedagogy, and politics.

Put differently, the discourse of critical literacy is one that signals the need to challenge and redefine the substance and effects of cultural borders, the need to create opportunities for teachers and students to be border crossers in order to understand otherness on its own terms, and the need to create borderlands in which diverse cultural resources allow for the fashioning of new identities within existing configurations of power.

ALPHABÉTISME ET COMMUNAUTÉS ETHNOCULTURELLES: ENTRE LE PUBLIC ET LE PRIVÉ ENTRE L'INDIVIDUEL ET LE COLLECTIF

Serge Wagner
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Mesdames et messieurs,

Je débuterai mon intervention par une mise au point que je puis me permettre puisqu'elle porte directement sur le thème de notre rencontre.

Cette conférence est officiellement partie intégrante des activités du 350e anniversaire de la fondation de Montréal - et cela est heureux. Mais cette relation ne saurait occulter ou excuser le piètre sort présentement réservé à l'alphabétisme et à l'alphabétisation par la société montréalaise et québécoise.

L'alphabétisme, d'abord. Ne retenons que deux faits. Les bibliothèques publiques de Montréal et du Québec souffrent d'un retard historique chronique par rapport aux autres villes du Canada. Le problème a été régulièrement soulevé au XIXe et au XXe siècle. Par exemple, en 1933, la commission Ridington mettait en lumière les retards des bibliothèques québécoises et montréalaises; dans son rapport, la Commission incluait, par ailleurs, une lettre du premier ministre du Québec A. Taschereau, dans laquelle ce dernier faisait état des ... «dangers des bibliothèques publiques» (p. 39)! [1] Aujourd'hui, les motifs de nos dirigeants politiques peuvent avoir changé, mais les actions qu'ils posent révèlent trop souvent la même incurie à l'égard de la lecture. Ainsi, à l'été 1992, les lecteurs usagers des bibliothèques publiques de Montréal ont été mis en «lock-out» pendant deux semaines : les bibliothèques ont tout simplement été fermées. Les principaux indicateurs en matière de bibliothèques publiques au Canada indiquent pourtant que Montréal se classe constamment dans les derniers rangs : que ce soit pour les heures d'ouverture, le budget, les emprunts de volumes [2], etc.

Dans le champ de l'alphabétisation, le dossier n'est guerre plus reluisant. Montréal et le Québec détiennent l'un des championnats canadiens de l'analphabétisme et du décrochage scolaire. Or, à l'automne 1992, on a vu des jeunes, par centaines, arriver la nuit, pour tenter désespérément de s'inscrire à des cours pour raccrocheurs. À la Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal, 22 267 personnes sont inscrites sur des listes d'attente, faute de place [3]. De telles données démontrent à quel point le droit à l'éducation et à l'alphabétisation est loin d'être adéquatement assuré pour les adultes de notre ville.

Nous sommes pour la plupart, j'imagine, des intervenants en alphabétisation. Or, l'alphabétisation n'est pas une question uniquement pédagogique : elle est d'abord fondamentalement politique – au sens premier et le plus noble du terme, c'est-à-dire relatif à la cité et au gouvernement de l'État. Dans le cas qui nous préoccupe, il s'agit de bien voir la valeur accordée à la lecture, à l'écriture et à l'éducation des adultes par notre société et par ses élus.

Quand une société met un frein à l'alphabétisation et promeut tièdement l'alphabétisme, elle ne doit pas se surprendre de la persistance, en son sein, d'un problème d'analphabétisme. Quant à nous, si nous voulons véritablement œuvrer pour une société plus alphabétisée, nous devons dénoncer de telles politiques d'incurie.

Dans une société démocratique et «alphabétique», les mots doivent pouvoir être dits ou être écrits.

Mais je dois ici m'expliquer brièvement sur la notion d'«alphabétisme» (*literacy*) que je distingue de l'«alphabétisation» (*literacy education*). Trop souvent, on s'est enfermé dans la relation duale **analphabétisme - alphabétisation**, oubliant un troisième terme, pourtant le plus important, celui de **l'alphabétisme**. À bien y penser, en effet, le contraire de l'analphabétisme, ce n'est pas l'alphabétisation : c'est l'alphabétisme. Et qu'est-ce que l'alphabétisme? Avançons sommairement que l'alphabétisme, c'est l'aptitude à lire et à écrire, mais que c'est aussi l'état et l'usage de l'écriture dans une société donnée. Enfin, dans une société multiculturelle comme la nôtre, l'alphabétisme existe dans des langues et dans des cultures particulières. Et il en va d'ailleurs ainsi de l'alphabétisation : on apprend à lire et à écrire dans une langue et dans une culture spécifiques.

Enfin, une dernière mise en garde. Dans mon intervention, je fais faire allusion au débat constitutionnel qui a présentement cours au Canada, mais je ne veux en aucune façon le faire dans un esprit étroitement partisan. C'est le thème même de la conférence, *Dimensions of Literacy in a Multicultural Society*, qui soulève le problème de l'aménagement linguistique du pays. Je le répète, la langue et la culture de l'alphabétisme et de l'alphabétisation ne sont pas neutres : elles sont le résultat de choix particuliers. Nous le savons fort bien au Québec, alors que la Loi 101, la loi 178 et l'article 23 de la Constitution canadienne ont un impact direct sur les langues de l'alphabétisation et sur la nature de l'alphabétisme dans notre société. D'ailleurs, dans le programme de la Conférence, l'introduction soulève directement cette question fondamentale:

> *Democracy and freedom it provides are rooted in literacy and depend to a large extent on the capacity of ordinary citizens, including new immigrants, to participate in the workings of their society.*

Corollairement, nous pourrions ajouter que la démocratie s'enracine dans la possibilité pour les citoyens de définir leur société et son alphabétisme.

Ces observations étant faites, je puis maintenant poursuivre mon exposé!

Mesdames et messieurs,

OUI ou NON! Telle est la question... YES or NO! «There will be an answer»...[4]

Tous les Canadiens réfléchissent présentement à ces deux mots si simples composés d'à peine quelques lettres! Le Canada est au cœur d'une crise constitutionnelle. Mais cette crise est aussi un événement alphabétique spectaculaire - inédit dans l'histoire de l'écriture au Canada.

Prenons, par exemple, le texte de l'entente constitutionnelle[5] que les dirigeants politiques canadiens ont laborieusement rédigée. Actuellement, c'est l'ensemble de la population canadienne qui en réclame une copie, qui tente de la lire, qui essaye d'en saisir le sens et d'en dégager la portée. Chaque ligne - voire chaque mot - est scrutée, soupesée, évaluée. Ainsi, on se demande pourquoi la plupart des verbes importants sont conjugués à la forme conditionnelle, pourquoi le document n'est pas signé; d'aucuns analysent même l'impact des astérisques dont ils ont fait l'addition! Qui plus est, une partie de la population ne se contente pas du texte politique de l'accord : elle en réclame la version *juridique*. Le premier ministre du pays a beau laisser entendre que le citoyen moyen n'y comprendra rien... Rien n'y fait. Les Canadiens veulent lire!

Cet exercice impressionnant où une société tout entière se livre à une activité fébrile collective de lecture et d'analyse de texte démontre l'importance qualitative nouvelle de l'alphabétisme au Canada. En fait, la valeur symbolique de l'écrit dans notre société a été véritablement consacrée, en 1982, au moment du rapatriement de la Constitution et de l'adoption de la *Charte des droits et libertés*. À partir de ce moment, c'est un document écrit qui est devenu le symbole de la citoyenneté canadienne, le texte fondamental auquel une majorité de Canadiens s'identifient. Toutefois, le problème de la Constitution de 1982, c'est que ce contrat social avait été adopté à l'encontre de la volonté de l'un des partenaires constitutifs du pays, la province de Québec.

Un des objectifs du processus constitutionnel dans lequel le pays est actuellement engagé est précisément de parvenir à ce que tous les partenaires sociaux puissent s'identifier à un texte écrit commun. La crise constitutionnelle que nous vivons est donc aussi une crise alphabétique : elle est le reflet d'une crise de l'alphabétisme au Canada. D'ailleurs, la section cruciale du projet constitutionnel, appelée «clause Canada», vise précisément à déterminer les «caractéristiques fondamentales» de notre pays : quelle est sa réalité ethnoculturelle, quel est le statut des cultures et des langues qui le composent et quels sont les rapports entre ces cultures et ces langues. L'alphabétisme – au sens où nous l'avons défini – est donc une partie intégrante du processus politique en cours.

Eu égard à l'alphabétisme dans un contexte multiculturel, que nous dit cette clause lorsqu'on la combine aux éléments de la *Charte de 1982*? Elle définit essentiellement la configuration de quatre Canadas : le Canada anglophone, le Canada francophone, le Canada autochtone et le Canada allophone ou multiculturel. C'est ainsi qu'elle met de l'avant les réalités suivantes dont l'existence ou la reconnaissance ont déjà ou auront un impact considérable sur l'alphabétisme et l'alphabétisation :

1. le français et l'anglais sont les langues officielles du Canada et du Nouveau-Brunswick;

2. les peuples autochtones «ont le droit de promouvoir leurs langues, leurs cultures et leurs traditions et de veiller à l'intégrité de leurs sociétés», et ceci sera assuré par la création d'un troisième ordre de gouvernement;

3. le droit à l'instruction dans leur langue est reconnu aux deux minorités officielles à l'intérieur de certains paramètres;

4. le Québec forme une société distincte que son gouvernement doit promouvoir et protéger;

5. les gouvernements sont «attachés» («committed», dans la version anglaise) à l'épanouissement des communautés minoritaires de langue officielle;

6. la société canadienne comprend des citoyens d'origines multiples, et l'on veut «promouvoir le maintien et la valorisation du patrimoine multiculturel des Canadiens».

À la lecture de ces diverses clauses, on voit donc se profiler ce que l'on pourrait appeler «l'alphabétisme national canadien» - c'est-à-dire la reconnaissance de certaines langues et de certaines cultures, reconnaissance se traduisant sur une stratégie complexe d'aménagement linguistique, culturel et politique du pays. Dans notre pays, l'alphabétisme et l'alphabétisation ne sont pas liés uniquement à des choix individuels ou communautaires : c'est aussi une «affaire d'État(s)». Et, notons-le ici, le projet culturel et alphabétique du Canada est manifestement différent de celui du *melting pot* de notre voisin américain.

Mais, si notre pays éprouve la nécessité de redéfinir ses composantes culturelles fondamentales, c'est assurément parce que certaines langues et cultures, certaines collectivités éprouvent des difficultés à se maintenir ou à s'épanouir dans le grand ensemble canadien. Pour parler net, il existe certains déséquilibres, certaines inégalités.

Le premier déséquilibre est d'ordre démographique. Le Canada est majoritairement anglophone. Et l'influence de l'anglais est accrue par la proximité américaine, proximité qui, paradoxalement, menace aussi l'existence d'une culture écrite authentiquement canadienne-anglaise. Cette pression de l'anglais n'est pas seulement liée au nombre d'individus qui parlent l'anglais : elle est aussi l'effet d'une vie économique, sociale, culturelle, «mass-médiatique» qui contribue à accentuer le phénomène d'«anglo-homogénéisation» du pays.

C'est dans un tel contexte que plusieurs langues minoritaires sont menacées, à l'oral et à l'écrit. Leur transmission et leur reproduction ne peuvent plus être adéquatement assurées uniquement par la seule volonté de la famille et de la communauté culturelle. La responsabilité première et déterminante de la famille et de la collectivité culturelle locale est importante, mais insuffisante. Pour le maintien des cultures minoritaires, le privé et l'individuel ne suffisent plus. On réclame aussi un appui public de l'État – à qui l'on demande de reconnaître d'abord officiellement les langues et cultures minoritaires ainsi que leur apport à la vie culturelle canadienne.

Outre les facteurs généraux que je viens d'évoquer, deux facteurs particuliers semblent avoir joué un rôle important dans l'érosion des langues et cultures minoritaires : le bilinguisme et l'école.[6] Ces deux réalités nous interpellent prioritairement toutes les personnes soucieuses de promopuvoir l'alphabétisation dans une société multiculturelle.

Bilinguisme et idéologie du bilinguisme

. Au Canada, un des facteurs qui menacent le plus la survivance des cultures minoritaires et des alphabétismes minoritaires, c'est une certaine forme de bilinguisme et l'«idéologie du bilinguisme». En étudiant les formes de bilinguisme dans notre pays, des chercheurs ont mis en lumière les phénomènes de «bilinguisme additif» et «bilinguisme soustractif», qui jettent une nouvelle lumière sur la question (Lambert, Gardner et al., 1968). Le bilinguisme devient soustractif lorsqu'une personne apprend une langue seconde (L2) dans un milieu où sa langue première (L1) est minoritaire, dominée, dévaluée, interdite et réduite à la sphère des échanges privés. Ce «bilingue» se trouve coincé de part et d'autre : «il est obligé d'apprendre la L2 pour vivre dans son milieu, mais c'est précisément cet apprentissage de la L2 qui le porte à dévaloriser sa L1» (Godbout, 1989). Sa situation d'insécurité culturelle empêche le minoritaire de bien apprendre l'une et l'autre langue. À la limite, il pourra perdre sa L1 sans maîtriser pour autant la L2; il deviendra «analphabète dans les deux langues». Au contraire, on a un bilinguisme «additif» quand la personne apprend une L2 dans un milieu où sa L1 est majoritaire ou socialement valorisée. Dans ce cas, le bilinguisme est un atout; il ne retarde pas le développement verbal et mental de la personne (Laponce, 1984). En résumé, le bilinguisme est positif pour les membres du

groupe majoritaire et souvent négatif pour ceux des groupes minoritaires dominés.[7]

. Trop souvent, le bilinguisme s'est révélé être la phase transitoire conduisant au transfert linguistique dans la langue dominante. En outre, le mouvement de transfert s'accélère quand, dans une communauté ethnolinguistique, la proportion d'unilingues dans la langue minoritaire devient faible. Aussi, a-t-on constaté qu'il est essentiel de maintenir ou de réaménager des espaces exclusifs de communication orales et écrites dans la langue de la minorité.

L'alphabétisation d'oppression

. Un autre facteur historiquement important d'analphabétisme dans la langue et dans la culture minoritaires a été, au Canada, l'école. Ici, nous nous référons au processus d'élimination des cultures minoritaires «établies»[8] (principalement les cultures autochtones et la culture française) par l'école publique. Bien souvent, les écoles publiques ont été des agents d'un analphabétisme d'oppression.

. Dans ces cas, la fréquentation scolaire entraîne à plus ou moins long terme l'élimination ou l'abâtardissement de la langue et de la culture minoritaires. Sous l'effet de cette action institutionnelle toute puissante, la minorité dominée perd progressivement l'usage de sa langue, sans toutefois parvenir à assimiler sur une base égalitaire celle du groupe dominant. Le minoritaire est obligé d'étudier dans une langue qui n'est pas la sienne. Ou alors, on lui enseigne sa langue minimalement, dans un contexte d'«école mixte» qui la dévalorise absolument. Ces situations entraînent toutes sortes d'effets pédagogiques : l'élève se retrouve déclassé, autant par rapport à sa propre langue dont il perd à peu près l'usage que par rapport à la langue majoritaire qu'il connaît mal et à travers laquelle il doit désormais penser, réfléchir, comprendre, travailler. Cette oppression donne lieu à une diversité de situations concrètes particulières, qui ont ceci en commun que, loin de produire un individu parfaitement assimilé et heureux de l'être, elles «développent» des sujets problématiques à maints égards, mal équipés linguistiquement, et qui, dans bien des cas, deviennent analphabètes à des degrés divers : analphabètes fonctionnels dans la langue majoritaire, analphabètes complets, souvent, dans leur propre langue.

Exploration des alphabétismes

Au Canada, tout projet d'alphabétisation des adultes au sein de communautés ethnoculturelles ne peut donc se permttre l'économie d'une analyse des effets (souvent cumulatifs) du bilinguisme et de l'école publique. Ces constats généraux étant sommairement esquissés, il est certain qu'il faudrait procéder à des diagnostics plus fins des situations particulières que vivent les différents Canadas ethnoculturels. Je me contenterai ici d'évoquer avec vous quelques dimensions des réalités vécues en matière d'alphabétisme par les communautés ethnoculturelles.

Ce faisant, je relèverai certains défis qui me semblent importants dans la voie d'une meilleure consolidation de l'alphabétisme dans une société multiculturelle - ce qui est le thème de la Conférence.

Les autochtones. Les autochtones comptaient près d'un demi-million d'individus en 1986. Proportionnellement peu nombreux par rapport à la population canadienne, leur diversité est spectaculaire : 53 langues autochtones distinctes rattachées à 11 familles linguistiques sont encore en usage au Canada. Toutefois, l'assimilation (principalement vers l'anglais) est très importante : seulement 47.2% des autochtones parlent encore leur propre langue (Hughes 1990:116) et la survie à long terme ne semble assurée que pour trois langues : le cri, l'objjway et l'inuktitut (Foster 1982).[9]

Les nations autochtones du Canada tentent actuellement de redéfinir leur place au pays. En matière d'alphabétisme, notamment, elles sont engagées dans un processus de reconquête de l'école et de promotion ou de revitalisation de leurs langues ou de leurs cultures d'origine. Fondamentalement, les autochtones ont décidé qu'ils ne voulaient plus être que des objets de textes écrits par les Blancs. La production de textes autochtones, adoptant un point de vue autochtone, s'est accrue d'une façon spectaculaire au cours des derniers 10 ans. Et, manifestement, nous ne sommes qu'au début d'un important processus de réappropriation et d'affirmation culturelles dont l'écrit sera partie intégrante. Plusieurs langues sont actuellement transcrites et codifiées. Certaines langues qui étaient, jusqu'à tout récemment, principalement ou exclusivement orales, commencent maintenant à être des langues écrites vivantes.

Par ailleurs, l'appui à ces langues est encore très fragile et il faut déplorer que la proposition émanant des autochtones d'instituer une «Fondation des langues autochtones» n'ait pas été retenue par le Parlement canadien, en 1989 (Assembly of First Nations, 1988).

Les francophones. À l'extérieur du Québec et du Nouveau-Brunswick, les minorités françaises éprouvent des difficultés sérieuses à maintenir leur langue et culture. En 1986, plus de 37 % des «francophones hors Québec» qui avaient le français comme langue maternelle étaient en voie d'en perdre l'usage. Par contre, ces minorités exercent un contrôle assez grand sur leurs institutions scolaires[10] et sur plusieurs organisations culturelles. Elles ont rompu avec les écoles bilingues ou «mixtes» et optent, partout où elles le peuvent, pour des écoles homogènes françaises.

La diminution drastique de la population francophone dans plusieurs régions du Canada met toutefois en péril la survie des institutions et des services dans la langue française (Taillefer et Gervais, 1991). Or, ces institutions sont essentielles au maintien d'un alphabétisme vivant. Incidemment, le même constat s'applique également à plusieurs communautés anglophones du Québec établies à l'extérieur de Montréal.

Les allophones. Les «allophones» sont de plus en plus nombreux au Canada. Mais les données nous indiquent que la transmission de la langue ancestrale d'une génération à l'autre est problématique (Pendakur, 1990; Kralt et Pendakur, 1991). Bien sûr, les «allophones» – parfois appelés «nouvelles minorités» – se retrouvent dans un situation délicate où ils doivent s'intégrer au pays tout en tentant de conserver leur patrimoine d'origine. Cet équilibre est d'autant plus difficile à trouver que les cultures d'origine sont souvent dévalorisées. Ainsi, une initiative récente heureuse, l'introduction de l'enseignement des langues ancestrales à l'école, soulève encore de vives polémiques (Cummins et Danesi, 1990).

Néanmoins, certaines communautés ethnoculturelles sont parvenues, dans certaines villes notamment, à créer des espaces dynamiques de vie ethnique où les communications orales et écrites peuvent se faire dans la langue d'origine. Au Québec enfin, les immigrants allophones se retrouvent souvent dans une situation de trilinguisme : tout en tentant de conserver leur langue première, plusieurs adoptent l'anglais comme langue d'usage, alors que leurs enfants sont contraints par la loi de fréquenter l'école française.

Ajoutons enfin que la création, en 1991, de l'Institut canadien des langues patrimoniales (*The Canadian Heritage Language Institute*) apparaît aussi comme une contribution significative à la consolidation d'un alphabétisme multiculturel au Canada.

L'ensemble du Canada.

Il y aurait, bien sûr, bien d'autres aspects à explorer et d'autres collectivités culturelles à prendre en considération, comme la minorité anglophone du Québec qui se sent menacée par son déclin démographique et qui s'inquiète pour la survie de ses institutions culturelles. Mais mentionnons aussi deux aspects problématiques en regard de l'alphabétisme, aspects pertinents à la société canadienne dans son ensemble. Car le Canada n'est pas que la somme de ses composantes ethnoculturelles!

D'une part, les enquêtes Southam de 1987[11] et de Statistique Canada de 1990[12], nous ont révélé que les performances canadiennes en alphabétisme - malgré le bien que j'en ai dit tantôt - sont moyennes, sinon médiocres. Un nombre trop élevé de citoyens sont analphabètes (environ 16%). Et surtout, peut-être, notre société comprend une proportion élevée de personnes qui, tout en sachant lire et écrire, préfère contourner l'écriture, à chaque fois que cela est possible (un 22% additionnel). Incidemment, voilà une donnée qui démontre encore que si l'alphabétisation est importante, l'alphabétisme constitue un défi encore plus considérable.

D'autre part, au Canada, les stratégies de contournement de l'écrit sont peut-être aussi partiellement les épiphénomènes d'une attitude plus radicale de rejet de l'écriture. Depuis quelque temps, on est témoin de gestes fréquents de «décrochage» à l'endroit de la société et de ses institutions – y compris de l'écrit, perçu comme faisant corps avec les institutions et les valeurs sociales établies. Déjà, on assiste à des manifestations ouvertes de cynisme populaire à l'endroit des gouvernants et des classes dominantes : leurs mots, leurs discours et leurs écrits sont perçus comme l'expression d'une langue de bois, vide de tout sens. À l'évidence, le tissu social de la société canadienne se distend, se fracture et laisse présager l'émergence d'une société «duale» opposant une majorité opulente ou à l'aise et alphabétisée à un prolétariat pauvre et analphabète. On le constate de plus en plus dans les centre-villes du pays : un segment important de la population vit, souvent au cœur même de la ville, dans les marges sociales et culturelles, en marge des institutions sociales, en marge des communications écrites, en marge de l'écriture qui n'agit plus comme ferment ou comme ciment social.

On assisterait à l'émergence d'un nouveau type d'analphabétisme, celui d'analphabètes «structurels» et «culturels». Cette catégorie existe, et l'on y retrouve d'ailleurs beaucoup de personnes issues de communautés ethnoculturelles identifiées plus haut. Ce qui est aussi inquiétant, c'est la dimension héréditaire que revêt également ce phénomène d'analphabétisme.

Pour conclure

On le voit, certains des défis que pose l'alphabétisme à une société qui veut assumer sa dimension multiculturelle sont considérables. Mais ces défis sont aussi emballants. Le Canada doit proposer une nouvelle définition de l'alphabétisme national et recréer en son sein un consensus «inter-national».

Le milieu canadien de l'alphabétisation est directement interpellé par cette tâche exigeante et exaltante. Mais cela suppose que l'on reconsidère la nature de l'alphabétisme et la nature de l'alphabétisation.

L'alphabétisme au Canada semble trop souvent perçu à travers une vision fonctionnelle réductrice. On ne semble voir l'alphabétisme que s'il y a des capacités mesurables, des rendements économiques à améliorer, des technologies matérielles en jeu, des problèmes opérationnels à régler.

On entend : «alphabétisation fonctionnelle», «alphabétisation en milieu de travail», et, pour les immigrants, «alphabétisation de survie». Certes, ce sont-là des initiatives louables. Mais elles n'épuisent pas le contenu potentiel de toute l'alphabétisation et elles n'introduisent pas à l'alphabétisme dans ses dimensions culturelles les plus fondamentales.

Dans les cas des immigrants, par exemple, et tout particulièrement des femmes analphabètes immigrantes, ce qu'on appelle «alphabétisation» se limite trop souvent à un enseignement rudimentaire de la langue dominante - et souvent, on n'a pas le temps d'aborder l'apprentissage de la langue écrite. Comme l'écrivait récemment, l'écrivain Émile Ollivier, pour plusieurs immigrants «le problème n'est pas seulement d'apprendre à lire et à écrire suffisamment, mais d'acquérir les codes sociaux en usage dans les sociétés modernes» (1991:35).

On ne peut construire la citoyenneté canadienne et l'alphabétisme canadien sur la base d'une alphabétisation mininale et réductrice. C'est pourquoi le contenu de l'«alphabétisme de base» et les objectifs et le contenu des activités d'«alphabétisation de base» doivent être sérieusement repensés.

Enfin, celles et ceux d'entre nous qui sont engagés dans l'alphabétisation, doivent se souvenir qu'ils interviennent toujours auprès de communautés ethnoculturelles. Même le groupe majoritaire est ethnique! Mais, ne nous faut-il pas aussi garder à l'esprit que l'alphabétisme de chaque communauté doit aussi transcender les différences et les particularités de la communauté? Il n'y a pas de civilisation, pas véritablement de pays, sans une culture authentique, c'est-à-dire animée en son centre par un grand paradigme spirituel, transcendant toutes les différences.

L'alphabétisme n'est que l'instrument de ce paradigme, le moyen par lequel une culture s'écrit, se lit, se réalise dans tous les ordres. Les statistiques le démontrent, le Canada a un problème d'écriture. Et si notre pays a un problème d'écriture, c'est aussi parce qu'il a un problème de culture. Depuis le début du siècle, l'alphabétisme canadien a progressé, cela est évident. Mais cet alphabétisme manque d'âme. Un fonctionnalisme trop étroit semble en être la philosophie principale.

Le poëte a écrit : «il faut redonner un sens aux mots de la tribu». Ne nous faut-il pas redonner un sens et donner **tout** leurs sens à l'alphabétisation et à l'alphabétisme?

Je nous souhaite une Conférence fructueuse et stimulante. J'espère que nos échanges nous permettront de progresser dans la construction d'un alphabétisme qui contribue véritablement au mieux-être de notre société, d'un alphabétisme qui contribue à la consolidation de sa dimension multiculturelle - d'un alphabétisme, enfin, qui, au premier chef, contribue au mieux-être des analphabètes.

Et je vous remercie.

Endnotes

1. Sur la question de l'alphabétisme au Canada français et de ses bibliothèques publiques, on devrait lire avec intérêt la mise en contexte qu'en faisait, en 1945, S. Bréhaut-Ryerson, dans son ouvrage, *Le Canada français*. S. Ryerson enseigna pendant plusieurs années au Collège Sir George Williams, l'une des institutions à l'origine de la présente université Concordia.
2. Baillargeon, S. 1992. Le dossier des Bibliothèques municipales. Montréal, zone sinistrée. *Le Devoir*. 26-09-92, pp. D-1 et D-4.
3. Montpetit, C. 1992. L'école du soir prise d'assaut. Le système d'éducation des adultes craque sous la demande. Vingt-trois mille personnes en liste d'attente à la CECM, faute de places. *Le Devoir*. 22-09-92, p. B-1.
4. Cette allocution fut prononcée pendant la compagne référendaire sur la Constitution du Canada, à l'automne 1992.
5. Cette *entente* constitutionelle est étrangement appelée "consensus": Gouvernement du Canada. 1992. *Rapport du consensus sur la Constitution. Charlottetown, 28-08-92.* Ottawa.
6. Le rôle du bilinguisme et de l'école publique dans l'émergence d'un "analphabétisme de minorité" a été exploré dans l'étude suivante : Wagner, S. et Grenier, P. 1991. *Analphabétisme de minorité et alphabétisme*

jeunes Canadiens français. Ottawa : Fédération des jeunes Canadiens français.

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d'affirmation nationale. Toronto: Ministère de l'Éducation.

7. Selon Cummins (1991), l'analphabétisme de ces derniers résulte d'une dévalorisation systématique de leur culture.
8. L'expression "cultures établies" renvoie à la notion de minorités "établies," c'est-à-dire des minorités jouissant dans un pays d'une certaine forme de reconnaissance publique. Au Canada, c'est le cas des autochtones, des francophones et de la minorité anglaise du Québec (Churchill, 1986, Wagner et Grenier, 1991).
9. Maurais (1992) propose un diagnostic partiel, mais plus nuancé.
10. Toutefois, le respect de l'article 23 de la Constitution garantissant l'accès à l'école français n'est pas assuré par tous les gouvernements provinciaux. "Six provinces continuent à violer impunément l'article 23 de la Charte des droits et Libertés, même si la Cour Suprême a reconnu aux minorités linguistique le droit à la gestion de leurs écoles (...)" (Dubé, 1992:24).
11. Southam News. 1987. *L'analphatétisme au Canada. Rapport d'enquête 1987.* Ottawa: Le groupe Innova Inc.
12. Statistique Canada. 1986. *L'enquête sur les capacités de lecture et d'écriture utilisées quotidiennement.* Ottawa.

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WORKPLACE LITERACY

RETURNING TO LEARNING

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Program Description

The Returning to Learning program is a bridging program designed to prepare displaced workers from three plant closures, in Lanark County in Eastern Ontario, to return to formal learning and retraining. The classroom is located in Perth, Ontario and is funded by the Ministry of Education, Literacy Branch and delivered by Algonquin College.

Since many prospective students for retraining will have been out of the formal learning process for some time, the objective of this program is to acclimatize them to the classroom, to orient the worker to the formal learning process, to expose him/her to techniques of time management, listening and note taking, writing a research essay, the metric system and mensuration, how to use the library reference material.

During the labour adjustment process, workers who chose to come forward, were informally assessed, counselled and advised, and occupational goals were identified and Individual Training Plans were developed. Of those involved in this process, some entered a training program directly, some chose academic upgrading at the local community college, some went directly to another job, and some chose the Returning to Learning program to refresh their skills. All were proficient in reading, writing and math at least the grade ten level. The students were former clerical and support staff, mechanics, supervisors and lead hands.

Instructional strategies were founded on the principles of learning-to-learn regular course content. Reinforcing and modelling were the vehicle. This involved the on-going and explicit identification of teaching/learning strategies throughout the teaching/learning process and adapting appropriate learning strategies to specific course content.

As required, vocational counselling was provided by the local Canada Employment Centre (CEC) and their counsellors.

Of the sixteen workers who entered in June 1992 and completed in September 1992, eight were men and eight were women. Ten were between the ages of twenty five and forty four, five were over forty five and one was under twenty five. During the course of the program, two became employed. The remaining fourteen achieved their goal and entered further training programs in September (carpentry, clerical upgrading, electronics and robotics, and health sciences).

All worker-students were receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) under Section 26.

The program ran twenty five hours a week for fourteen weeks. In September, a proposal was written and approved for a fourteen week extension of the program to accommodate a new group of workers laid-off by another plant closure. A literacy component was incorporated into the program for this group.

The classroom was in space rented by Algonquin College, in a small mall, across from the CEC office, very close to the down town core of Perth. The instructor was a professional teacher, with special sensitivity to the needs of the adult learner, differing learning styles and the special problems of laid-off workers. He was assisted by a part time instructor.

The Displaced Worker and Special Training Needs

There is a dramatic rise in unemployment among older workers. Factors contributing to this are the disappearance of certain old, established industries such as textile and clothing manufacturers and the privatization of the public sector. Until recently the older worker was protected from job loss by simple seniority. As the labour force ages, the impact of economic adjustment reaches these workers more immediately. Younger workers are no longer the first to loose their jobs.

Workers who suddenly loose their jobs in mass lay-offs, plant closures suffer not only economic problems but also psychological and social problems. They have little or no experience with the job market or how to access it, limited employment experience and limited job skills that are transferrable. It is unlikely that they will find jobs or wages similar to their previous employment.

These workers are traumatized by their job loss and are often bitter and angry. They need special assistance in coping with the problems related to their job loss. Often they must cope with the negative attitude society has about the ability of older people to retrain - and just as often they hold the same prejudices about their own ability to learn.

The first response by workers who are offered the opportunity to retrain is great concern about how they are going to manage financially. Can they support their family on UI? Until they are reasonably reassured they cannot contemplate anything other than the drive to go find another job - any job. The second response is total doubt about their ability to learn. Can old dogs learn new tricks? Why should I have to? I am a skilled worker, is this now without value?

Then they worry about how this will effect their family and friends. Will it take too much time away from their family? Will they still be able to coach minor hockey? Where is the training? There is an insidious feeling that school is for kids, not grown men and women who have been working and earning for twenty years. What will people say?

Aside from the obvious counselling, reassurance and a refresher in the three R's, the worker/learner needs special physical classroom considerations. Many have minor disabilities and hearing and visual levels are often reduced.

Thus the Returning to Learning program is developed to bridge the gap between the point where the learner is now and the point he/she wishes to reach.

Curriculum

The core curriculum is: (not in any order of priority)

1. Specific Academic Upgrading as Identified in the Individual Training Plan During the Assessment and Labour Adjustment Process (e.g., Math preparation for Robotics, Math for Heritage Carpentry - English for the Health Sciences).
2. Listening and Note Taking - using the radio, learning from lectures.

3. Study Skills in the Content Areas - strategies for problem solving in content areas, such as where to get background information (physics for electronics); strategies for programs requiring grade 12 English (vocabulary, essay writing for the Health Sciences).
4. Using the Library - learn the computer/card index, how to use the references
5. Essay Writing - how to structure the essay, types of essay, outline, summarize
6. Exam and Test Taking - becoming familiar with the various formats (multiple choice, True/False, essay); anxiety reducing strategies; preparing (being informed about the test).
7. Time Management - studies, family, social, work.
8. Critical Thinking - incorporates a combination of critical thinking approaches within the content areas. some free standing critical thinking exercises with applied concepts to content. Interactive work on examples, group work, debate, discussion, problem solving and making the student aware of the learning process. Some attention is given to particular learning styles. We help the learner to know his/her style of learning, the way they learn best. For example: do you learn best by taking notes as I talk or by listening?
9. Computer Literacy and Word Processing
10. Tours and Open House, and Guest Speaker

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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE REQUIRED FOR ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS

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The language component in job descriptions appears to have been neglected by employers who tend to define it in general terms (a high school diploma or native-like proficiency in French or English) without regard to the actual level of competence a person need, to have to perform the job satisfactorily. Aside from immigrants who may not be literate in French or English, or for that matter in their native language. there are workers who are literate in English but cannot function at the same level of literacy in French, and native speakers of French who may lack the necessary literacy skills. especially when the use of technology is involved.

The focus of the study is on entry-level jobs in the service industry which are usually filled by young adults. The importance of the assessment of the language competence needed for these jobs is underscored by the growing ethnocultural diversity of the workforce and by the results of a number of surveys indicating that a sizeable proportion of young adults entering the workplace may lack the required literacy skills. However, little is known about the language skills that are in fact required for entry-level jobs. The research that has been conducted so it shows a great deal of variation in terms of the level of difficulty of the literacy tasks associated with the same category of jobs. For instance, within the same enterprise, a secretary may only have to format text while another may be called upon to make extensive corrections on a handwritten text while typing it. Although these two positions may be classified at the same level, in terms of language competence, the knowledge and skills for these two jobs are qualitatively different.

The assessment of the language competence required to perform a job is a complicated process involving the collection of many different kinds of data since the real work setting in which the duties are performed has to be taken into account. The preliminary results being reported here represent only one aspect of a large-scale on-going research project on the language and technological competence needed to fill entry-level jobs. This text will focus on the procedure used to determine the level of difficulty of job literacy skills. The basic unit of analysis is the literacy task which is defined as the use of reading or writing for the performance of the duties assigned to an employee.

A hospital comprises many different kinds of entry-level jobs which call for the performance of a large array of duties in a variety of contexts. For this reason, a hospital was chosen as a data collection site because it was thought that the language skills requirement would most probably vary from low to high across jobs.

First, the method used to collect data will be described, and second, one job will be discussed to illustrate the kinds of findings that may be expected.

The data collection for the assessment of the language competence for each separate job which is analyzed is conducted through triangulation of various sources of information: job descriptions, interviews of employees and employers, observation of the workers, and evaluation of the level of difficulty of print materials. There is first an analysis of the job description, which according to the employer, comprises the list of the main duties as well as some indication as to the qualifications required by the employee. This description may or may not cover the whole range of duties the employee actually does perform in his job.

Second, the supervisor is also interviewed to get into the specifics of the job as he perceives it should be done. There is generally a great deal of overlap with the job description but it usually includes more detailed information about the context in which the tasks have to be performed.

Wherever applicable, at least two employees doing the same job are interviewed, preferably a younger one with less experience and an older one with many years of experience. The purpose of this interview is to get the employee to describe his duties including those involving the use of language, to identify the literacy tasks necessary for the performance of the job as well as the list of documents that are used.

Once these data have been collected and compared, there emerges a series of duties which may differ to some extent from the initial job description. The literacy tasks associated with the performance of each individual duty are then identified.

Finally, the employee is observed while doing his job to validate the previous data and to document the manner in which the documents are in fact used. The work context may be such that what appears to be a difficult literacy task may turn out to be at the basic level if, for instance, it is repetitive or, conversely, it may be found to be far more cognitively demanding than the preliminary analysis of the data suggested. Context is an important variable to take into account in this kind of analysis because it impacts on the level of difficulty of the literacy task.

For each literacy task, the document being used has to be analyzed in terms of the depth of processing required. This is done through Kirsch & Mosenthal's text grammar which gives a hierarchical structure of the text in turns of levels that have to be processed to gain access to a given piece of information. This is the first step of the analysis. The second step consists of determining exactly what the employee has to do with this text. If, for example, the objective is to locate a specific information, the difficulty of the task will depend upon where this information is embedded in the text, whether or not inferences have to be made and whether the text has to be processed each time or not. A chart could be a difficult document to use if the location of the information requested varied or it could be rather easy if the information could always be found in the same row and column.

Using this methodology, each job has to be analyzed separately to establish its literacy requirements.

To illustrate this point, and for lack of space, the case of a job requiring a low level of literacy will be used.

The job description of the washing machine operator mentions, among other things, that the dirty linen has to be removed from the chutes, then weighted and loaded into the washing machines, and that it has to be taken out when the wash is finished before reloading with soiled linen. The supervisor confirmed this information and added nothing to the job description. The two employees who were interviewed also mentioned the two tasks of loading and unloading the machines. The only literacy task mentioned in the job description is the daily recording of all wash cycles. The supervisor and the two employees also confirmed this. What is recorded is the time the wash cycle began, at what time it ended and the quality of the linen, that is how soiled it was. Since all sources of data concur, we can be pretty sure that the list of duties is complete and that the only literacy task is in fact the one identified. In this case, the observation of the workers did confirm both the list of duties and the literacy task.

The next step consists in an analysis of the document that has to be processed to perform the job, namely filling a form. The result of this analysis indicated that according to Kirsch & Mosenthal's text grammar, the document used by the washman is a basic level literacy task. Moreover, this being a routine task and since a worker can always ask another one for help, this task is in fact a very simple one which requires being able to tell the time and record it, and to determine whether the linen is very dirty or not. It also requires being able to write the time.

However, the work environment contained print materials, that is instructions for the use of products and for the operation of the washing machines, that were not processed during the performance of the job because the employees were given oral instructions. It could be argued that an employee should be able to process these materials and others for a number of reasons that cannot be discussed here, thereby increasing the level of difficulty of the literacy tasks of the job.

There are other cases where data collected from each source differed to some extent and where the literacy tasks demanded higher level language skills. It is only through the observation of the employee within the work setting and the analysis of the print materials that this can be documented.

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LITERACY TASK ANALYSIS

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Literacy Task Analysis is a process for analyzing jobs and tasks. Increasingly, it is being used by workplace literacy service providers and by business and labour trainers to gain more knowledge about jobs so that appropriate and relevant curriculum may be designed.

Literacy Task Analysis is relatively new in the Canadian context. I have had the pleasure of helping to develop the Canadian research base in this area through work carried out with Dr. Maurice Taylor, presently with the University of Ottawa. The research was carried out in 1990 through a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat to Algonquin College in Ottawa. My participation in the project was arranged through a Labour Canada assignment.

My presentation today will attempt to make clear some of the mysteries of Literacy Task Analysis. As I have become more and more familiar with how it works, I have come to realize that it is a flexible process and that it can be done in a relatively uncomplicated way. I would like to be able to help people who are new to the process and who may worry about it being difficult or time consuming.

It is important to note at the outset two key facts about Literacy Task Analysis - firstly, that it is an analysis of THE JOB, NOT THE PERSON, and secondly that it is not a time and motion study. In a sense, what you get from a Literacy Task Analysis is a layered job description - one which shows the tasks within a job, but which especially highlights as the second layer the reading, writing, maths and communications skills needed to do the job.

My presentation will centre on four major questions, and I hope that each of them will help to clarify the methodology and usefulness of Literacy Task Analysis so that you can decide if it is something you want to use.

1. What are the advantages of using literacy task analysis to identify training needs and to develop workforce training?

Literacy Task Analysis is based on knowledge gained from workers about jobs which are actually being performed in the workplace. This means that relevance is assured. Workers, in describing their own job tasks, are able to give you valuable information about the basic skills needed to perform these jobs.

By looking at several jobs in a job cluster you can identify the incremental skills needed if a worker is to move from Job A to Job B to Job C. Building a skills profile for a career ladder is the outcome. This is really exciting because it takes the guess work out of curriculum planning. Also, think how useful it can be to know that team work, problem solving and sequencing, for instance, are just as important for a specific job as are reading, writing and math. The knowledge of how these broader skills are reflected in a job will help the trainer develop training which addresses the whole spectrum of need.

2. How do you determine which jobs to analyze and which techniques to use?

Before you can answer this question, you really need to know WHY you are analyzing jobs in that workplace. Has the workplace gone through recent technological change which will mean that workers need to learn new job tasks? Is the company setting up a new division which will involve a great deal of training for entry level new employees? Are transferability and promotability factors which are of concern to management, union and workers?

Once you have decided WHY you are doing an analysis, you will then be in the position of knowing WHICH jobs to analyze. For instance, if several employees in a certain division are retiring in the very near future, you will want to analyze not only their jobs but also possible "feeder" jobs into that position. You may also want to look at several jobs above as well as several below. Don't forget about lateral mobility either. Often the reason that you have been invited into the workplace is because of a very specific need which has proven baffling to the managers.

The techniques of Literacy Task Analysis are diverse. If you are looking at basic skills training from the context of workers transferring from one job to another, you will want to use a technique that lends itself to comparability. Several do that. If, on the other hand, you want really detailed information about one particular job, several other techniques are better suited to in depth reporting.

There is not time in this presentation to explain the various techniques of Literacy Task Analysis which are available to you. Details can be found in the Literacy Task Analysis "How to" Manual and the Final Technical Report which were outputs of the Literacy Task Analysis Project. Suffice it to say that I have one favourite technique which has served me very well in a number of settings. It is the Structured Job Analysis Interview which was developed in England. It is made up of 33 questions covering many aspects of basic skills, and it is easy to administer.

3. Will this be a time consuming process, both in learning the techniques and in conducting the analysis?

This question is often asked. There is no set answer to how long the process will take. Getting an overview of the techniques available to you can be obtained in several days. It is harder to judge how long it will take to actually carry out your analysis, since that will depend on how many jobs you analyze and how much reporting detail you choose to include.

Each analysis, however will be made up of two interviews and one or two periods of observation. it may help you to know how much time the process has taken me in the past. The first interview takes about an hour. Within that hour you apply several techniques of LTA. Generally, I use the Structured Job Analysis Interview and one other technique. Then, there is the Observation phase, which usually takes place on a separate day from the interview. It is important not to interrupt the worker at this time but simply to observe. Note any questions you may have and then ask them at the second interview, held either immediately after the observation or on another day. The second interview is generally shorter than the first and is more to clarify points than to seek new information.

You will also spend some time in writing up your findings and seeing how they fit together in a report. The length and detail of this writing stage will depend on whether or not the same person who is doing the analysis will also be the person developing the curriculum. This is the ideal, but if a different person will be doing the curriculum development then it is important to get down enough detail to serve that person's needs.

The whole process could be described under the following headings: a) Information Gathering, b) Stage, c) Consultation Stage, d) Preparation Stage, e) Implementation Stage, f) Recommendation Stage, and g) Follow-up Stages.

Information Gathering Stage: Read about Literacy Task Analysis from a multitude of sources.

Consultation Stage: Meet with workplace partners to determine if LTA is a good option, and to establish purpose.

Preparation Stage: Become familiar with the workplace and its culture through site tours, interviews with employer and union people. Conduct a formal or informal needs assessment.

Implementation Stage: Interview and observe highly competent performers and apply a variety of LTA techniques to the jobs selected. Complete the analysis and hold verification meetings to confirm findings.

Recommendation Stage: Suggest to workplace partners ways in which LTA may be used to target job specific training.

Follow-up Stages: Design a training plan; develop curriculum based on the LTA; conduct training. Ideally the same person who has done the LTA will continue to be involved through these subsequent stages.

4. What's in it for me as a workplace stakeholder (as a company manager, a union leader, a service provider, a worker)?

The company: Securing the bottom line means more than improving productivity and enhancing market share. It depends as well on employee performance and motivation. When a company gives workers a clearer line to transferability and promotability the positive effects rebound on the company.

The union: By using Literacy Task Analysis to help workers establish their own training goals, the union may contribute to greater worker satisfaction. Remember as well that LTA could be used to determine training paths for union positions such as business agent.

The service provider: Literacy Task Analysis takes the mystery out of jobs so that training can respond to real needs. When training is relevant and uses pertinent vocabulary and contexts, it is more likely to be of help to the learners. Curriculum which is built on LTA is no longer hit and miss.

The worker: Workers whose basic skills have been allowed to languish are deprived of vital satisfaction at work. Sometimes a worker may have his/her eyes on the job of a retiring co-worker but has little idea of whether he/she has the skill base to apply for it. Literacy Task Analysis can identify the skill gap which must be bridged if the employee is to move into the desired position.

Concluding Comment

Literacy Task Analysis is a process and a tool. If you are doing a Basic Skills Needs Assessment, you will find that LTA fits neatly into that process. It is also a way to build very solid rapport between and among the workplace partners. Workers are generally very cooperative and eager to talk about their job and their aspirations in the workplace. Many service providers have been put off by LTA, thinking that it must be complicated and hard to administer. That is not true. Because of the great variety and range of methods that are available, you can choose methods that suit your own needs and preferences. After working with Literacy Task Analysis, first as a researcher, and then as a practitioner, I can enthusiastically recommend it.

FIRST STEP: MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

Dini Steyn
Alberta Vocational College, Edmonton

As a microcosm of Alberta's cultural diversity, university and college campuses across Canada are struggling to deal with rapid cultural change. With the federal commitment to immigration, the pressure on institutions of higher learning to keep pace, will grow. This change has placed added strain on administrators, faculty and support staff in areas such as the move to customer service, portability of credentials, curriculum considerations, and employment equity. However, to accommodate staff and students from vastly different cultural backgrounds, is an acquired skill, not a talent, therefore training will make a difference.

Before programs such as employment equity are introduced, staff should become aware of, and buy into, the need for such sweeping changes. **First Step** is a comprehensive inservice training package which sets the scene for change for staff at post-secondary institutions.

First Step is a partnership program between Alberta Multiculturalism Commission (AMC) and Alberta Vocational College - Edmonton (AVC-E). In 1990 AMC changed its mandate to focus on access, awareness and participation within the province of Alberta to encourage a broader range of involvement. Target areas are health, education and municipalities. The First Step program became the first of a series of training programs developed and funded under this initiative - a prototype for post-secondary institutions.

In June 1990, a consultant conducted a needs assessment at AVC-E. Typical cross-cultural scenarios were collected from ten focus groups. These 129 scenarios or critical incidents formed the basis of the materials which were developed for the First Step training package. Three target groups were identified for the training: managers, instructors and support staff. The workshops for each target group were field-tested on some of the focus group members and also during the three-day training for trainers at Alberta Vocational College - Edmonton.

1. **"Challenge at Treaty River"** is a simulation activity for managers. Participants are grouped into teams of eight. Each member is a representative for a key player associated with the project of implementing an academic upgrading program at Treaty River, a small town in Northern Alberta. The roles are those of AVC administrators, instructors, a town councillor, a human resources director of a local pulp mill and an employment and immigration centre representative. Included are persons of Aboriginal, East Indian and Ukrainian heritage. Several committee meetings are held, and issues and policies are discussed. Information sessions, games and videos on demographics, learning styles, cultural adaptation and systemic discrimination inform participants and gradually affect decision making.

2. **"A Part of Someone's Life"** is designed to help instructors recognize some of the difficulties encountered by cultural minorities. It leads towards an understanding of high and low context learners and right and left brain learners. It assists the instructor in designing teaching activities appropriate to different learning styles. Games and activities are highly interactive and enhance sensitivity to differences and understanding of personal values and assumptions.

3. **"Walk A Mile"** guides administrative staff to interact successfully with students who have been socialized in different ways from themselves. The emphasis is on empathy and the realization that intercultural skills equal interpersonal skills: we just have to practice our skills in intercultural situations.

In November, 1991 Alberta Multiculturalism Commission assisted AVC-E in promoting First Step to all 27 post-secondary institutions in Alberta. Eight presentations were held in Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray. Several institutions have shown interest and the program is presently being implemented at AVC-E's sister institution in Calgary.

At least 40 calls from across Canada demonstrates the national need for such a program. Although many innovative training programs have been offered, First Step is unique in that it offers a complete training package to all staff members at colleges and universities.

The program title was chosen to leave no doubt in the minds of participants that this is the first step in a long process of institutional change. Unless the institution is committed to a long term process of adapting its entire system to being more open to diversity, the impact of the training will be marginal. First Step works because it:

- involves a large number of staff in the development and delivery of the program, thus creating an early "buy-in";
- begins with management commitment and input;
- is custom-designed for each institution based on critical incidents gathered during the needs assessment;
- develops a pool of trained intercultural facilitators whose skills will be a personal asset and an asset to the institution;
- develops cross-cultural awareness and coping skills at all levels of the institution;
- measures attitudinal change through its evaluation instrument;
- becomes the property of the institution;
- builds fertile ground for subsequent steps in becoming a truly multicultural institution.

It is important to mention that First Step is a process and not just a training package to be bought, taught and forgotten. The process comprises a needs assessment, customization of the materials to the needs of the target institution; training the trainers; assistance with initial workshops and some ongoing consultation. Because this process takes at least ten weeks to complete, it is not always realistic for out-of-province institutions to consider. Consequently interested institutions outside Alberta can purchase the materials and a three-day orientation. The orientation includes a manual and a presentation on the First Step process and materials and how First Step fits into the organizational process.

In its quest to manage or promote cultural diversity, an organization can be at one of the following three levels:

1. a **monocultural** institution which is characterized by explicit or implicit exclusion of racial minorities;

2. a **non-discriminatory** organization where there is a sincere desire to eliminate the majority group's unfair advantage and a fixation on the right numerical symmetry of people of different races and genders; or

3. a **multicultural** organization which reflects contributions and interests of diverse groups in its mission, operations, supplies and services; which commits to eradicate all forms of racial discrimination; and which shares the power and influence so that no one group has an unfair advantage over another.

First Step begins the process in assisting an institution to become a truly multicultural institution!

CRITICAL LITERACY

TOWARDS A CRITICAL MULTICULTURAL LITERACY INTRODUCTION

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Making healthy personal and political choices within the complex world in which we live, is an essential component for a productive and happy democratic life. Our ability to make healthy choices requires re-conceptualizing life in ways that promote social and self empowerment through independent thought, reflection, and self examination. This intellectual and emotional empowerment allows us to authorize and validate our lives precisely because our decisions become the product of our critical thinking. Expanded personal, cultural, and historical understanding is a profound factor in the development of fairminded intelligence--as opposed to narrow-minded intelligence; and personal, and social transformation-- in contrast to unconscious affirmation and intellectual stagnation. The ability to exercise reciprocity (to imaginatively place oneself in the "shoes" of others often diverse in thought from ourselves, to consider strengths and weaknesses of opposing cultural and political points of view, and to overcome our sometimes ego-centric tendencies to wed ourselves blindly and uncritically to one belief or another without the benefit of self-examination and critical analysis), is to begin to think fairmindedly and critically. If as Maxine Greene stated, "to be a citizen of the free world means having the capacity to choose" (Greene, 1988), then asking ourselves how we arrive at our conclusions and choices, on what assumptions we base our inferences, what evidence we have to support our beliefs, and what other points of view inform the bank of data and evidence we utilize to support our assumptions and consequent decisions and actions, become essential questions of humanity which should occupy a place in our personal and public dialogue. If we are to live together as diverse human beings, we must become actively engaged in dialogue about diversity, with an interest in developing fairminded reasoning in the search for personal, social, and political transformation.

As we prepare to ascend into the 21st century equipped with countless technological achievements, innovations, and gadgets, the social "space" that separates us continues to grow larger. The technological prowess so assiduously acquired and applauded in the 20th century pales drastically when juxtaposed next to the social, cultural, and economic problems which are on an incremental increase for most world citizens. Cultural and racial intolerance are proceeding at alarming rates with dire political and social consequences. Cultural conflicts and tensions have defined social and political chasms between Serbs and Croats in Yugoslavia, they have fostered nationalism in the former Soviet Union, increased racial hatred and violence among right-wing groups in Germany (U.S. News and World Report, 1991), have contributed to growing cultural intolerance that proliferates the French political landscape (Lawday, D., 1991), and have provided a forum for racism, homophobia, and sexism here at home. A cursory glance at our own American social fabric illustrates evidence of heightened sociocentricity or "group thinking", as we witness Bensonhurst in New York, racist reactions to the Los Angeles rebellion, the rise in Church and Synagogue desecrations, appeals to "America First", and the countless daily examples of xenophobic and racist ideology that litters the American social, political, and intellectual tapestry. All of these incidents exemplify the challenges to be faced and the massive social problems to be overcome, if we are to truly live harmoniously together in a pluralistic society as diverse human beings.

This paper proposes what is termed as a "critical multicultural literacy". It is a commitment to recognizing the relationship between theory and practice in pedagogy aimed at constructively creating a praxis that promotes dialoguing, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing issues of relevant historical and contemporary multicultural concerns. For purposes of inquiry, culture is defined as the "unique manner by which diverse groups of human beings organize and actualize their physical and mental lives in dialectical confrontation with biological survival, oppression, resistance, and the struggle for human dignity, self-determination, and fulfilment" (Weil, 92). This definition of necessity includes discourses and narratives regarding gender, race, age, and socio-economic class.

Cultural encapsulation, ethnocentricity, (or the belief in the inherent superiority of ones own group or culture), is a limiting factor in achieving intellectual character or human freedom in our growing pluralistic society. Much of what we learn to believe uncritically is derived from social structures of power--television, movies, popular culture, our parents, friends, institutions, and teachers. This "associational thinking" or borrowed thinking that is not rigorously or critically examined, often poses as our own thinking upon which we decide what to believe and what to do. As associational thinking substitutes for critical reflective thinking, the uncritical mind looks for stereotypes and simplistic categories in which to conveniently place people, things, and places. This unquestioned "associational thinking" lends itself to self-delusion and authoritarian manipulation (Reich, W., 1946) as uncritical associational thinkers are customary prey for political and social demagoguery. Without the benefit of critical reasoning within and about diverse cultural points of view, the human mind becomes at peace with internalized cultural stereotypes, falsehoods, prejudices, and biases, and can accomplish little to help transform the world lived in and with others. Unable to experience itself in tune with reality, the uncritical human mind is rendered essentially impotent. The result is not simply a limitation of choices as the world perspective narrows, but an inability to arrive at reasoned judgment about what to choose, what to do, or what to believe. Devoid of this ability, the uncritical human mind is unable to participate fully and wisely in personal and democratic life.

The Three Underlying Tenets of a Critical Multicultural Literacy

A critical multicultural literacy argues that in a pluralistic society education should affirm and encourage the quest for self-examination through social transformation by creating relevant problem-posing activities that allow students to confront the challenges offered by the diversity of the reality of everyday life. These challenges inevitably arouse in students the necessity of examining the various cultural assumptions that form their own beliefs relative to cultural assumptions from diverse cultural backgrounds. Students need opportunities to begin to see their cultures as others see them-- thereby allowing them to rethink their own cultural beliefs. Understanding diversity is to understand diversity of thought, action, and conditions relative to pressing social and institutional power structures. It is to understand the logic of thinking, from the point of view of gender groups, gays, the aged, the disabled, newly arriving immigrants, people of color, and economically disadvantaged social classes. By engaging in critical cultural examination and analysis, students can free themselves from unexamined biases and prejudices, while at the same time significantly enhance and expand their abilities to think and act fairmindedly and critically about and with other culturally diverse viewpoints on historical and contemporary reality. Students come to see diversity as a strength as opposed to a plague. Students exposed and involved in critical thinking about culture, eventually become increasingly ill-at-ease without the benefit of diverse thinking activities, discourse, reflection, and metacognition. Furthermore, the reflective examining mind can reason as to the origin and nature of its uncritical thought, and thus more fully participate in and transform a world lived in common with others. With increased appreciation and knowledge of diversity, students have an opportunity to become not just in the world but with the world. For this reason we argue that reasoning multiculturally is a dialectical process. It is to gain an insight into ones' self and others through historical and cultural understanding, while at the same time developing an insight into history and culture through subjective self. The development of critical consciousness on the part of our students promises the opportunity for social praxis and transformation that challenge the social structures from which many, if not all internalized associational assumptions and myths, derive their origins. Pronounced and defined in these terms, multicultural education is education for personal and social freedom and as such, remains education for all (Parekh, 1986). The following three tenets comprise a defensible approach to critical literacy:

1. Educational Equity

The argument for a truly effective and sound approach to multicultural education posits a paradigm that incorporates among other things, the necessity for educational equity within schooling and society as a whole. Any critical multicultural literacy approach to education must commit itself in theory and practice to providing meaningful reasoning opportunities to all students regardless of race, class background, color, nationality, gender or disabilities (Banks, 1992) (CABE, 1992). Any holistic understanding of the role of educational equity must embrace the necessity of envisioning and constructing a general societal movement dedicated towards egalitarian economic and social democracy. Education is not a panacea for the profound social oppression that defines current reality for the many. To confront the issue of educational equity directly and honestly, is to confront the necessity for an "acute" paradigm shift towards general societal humanistic values and changes-- from the classroom to the workplace, from the family to the State. It would be disingenuine to propose that equity can exist within the institution of education, while economic and social inequities pervade major institutions as a whole. For this reason, the construction of a coherent and defensible notion of educational equity and critical literacy should minimally address the following equity issues:

Diverse Teacher Recruitment and Training

The issue of teacher recruitment to meet the needs of the diverse student population of today's and tomorrow's changing demographics must remain an issue of central concern within a critical multicultural pedagogy. Innovative ideas such as providing opportunities for teacher training and education to bilingual classroom aides is one way of meeting this challenge. The increasing task of recruiting minorities and people of color to serve the demographic and language needs of our students is an essential goal that multicultural education must confront and meet.

Teacher Training

Any discussion of educational equity must confront the issue of teacher training. Lack of teacher recruitment and training within diverse populations remains only one serious problem and obstacle in assuring educational equity and reasoning opportunities to all students. Another pernicious problem is the state of current teacher attitudes towards those to whom they provide instruction. Teachers often bring their own sociocentric and egocentric predisposition's to the life of the classroom, thereby wittingly or unwittingly allowing these attitudes to affect their decisions about who can and cannot learn. Many teachers feel unprepared, alienated, and even unaware of the cultural and historical backgrounds of the students they service. Many classroom practices frequently fail to afford ample time for the cultural and historical voices represented by diverse populations. Furthermore, with growing language disparities between teachers and students, many educators find that they cannot communicate with the large majority of their students and leave the education of these limited-English students to classroom aides who although may harbor sincere compassion and commitment, often have little or no experience with critical pedagogy.

Teachers themselves must consistently search to develop a critical attitude, an inward questioning through which they increasingly begin to see the reasons behind why they teach what they teach, what they do in the classroom, and why they believe and decide as they do. Rather than be unconscious agents of political power and cultural elitism, teachers must consistently strive to become more socially and culturally literate. Teachers must understand that they too have biases that must consistently be critically examined. They must seek to question their own often associational assumptions concerning diversity, the implications of these assumptions on their curriculum, who they decide can and cannot learn, and the manner in which they distribute meaningful opportunities for learning to all students. It would be intellectually dishonest, counterproductive, and intellectually catastrophic to students, to ask teachers who are not embarked on the critical quest for social and cultural literacy to attempt to teach students from varied social and cultural backgrounds. Sound teacher-training programs should be constructed to afford teachers educational opportunities to gain an insight into many of their unexamined attitudes, as well as societal attitudes towards cultural reality and the students they teach. There must exist genuine opportunities for critical cross-cultural training for teachers of all students, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, or culture.

Many teachers consider their students "marginal" or outside the "middle class" mainstream. Unconsciously they are often seen as inferior, subordinate, devoid of reason, incapable, and inherently valueless or intrinsically dysfunctional. For such teachers it is imperative that they begin the cultural dialogue with their students and the communities from which they come. As these attitudes are more than often simply mistaken, teachers would profit from more contact with the communities and students they service. They may come to find, through critical reflection and experience with other cultural points of view, that alcoholism, crime, slums, sickness, drug addiction, and dysfunctional families are not the providence of "a wicked or insignificant populace", but are the echoes of the evils that permeate the very social structures within which we live--structures deeply in need of social and political transformation. Furthermore, it must be understood that teachers are often unconscious agents of a political agenda inherent in classroom texts and life. To engage in critical reflection they must unceasingly evaluate their own work and seek to understand how the world of culture and history becomes a product created by men and women--a product capable at the same time of conditioning men and women blindly to unexamined falsehoods and social justifications for continued dominant practices.

Winnie Porter, a kindergarten teacher in San Francisco, describes how her assumptions and conclusions about her students changed as a result of experiencing and understanding the realities of her students' lives:

> *When I came back from the first time I visited the projects, the kids behavior didn't bother me that much anymore. When you realize what home lives some kids come from and what they have to deal with you realize they're not naughty kids, but just expressing their frustration and anger... One of my*

> *little girls comes in without socks in the morning. If I'd never been at her home and seen that Mom has eight kids, one year apart, and she's on welfare and on crutches, I'd probably get angry with mother and ask why the hell she can't get socks on her child in the morning. But after the visit I realize that this six year old not only have to dress herself, but her three brothers and sisters in the morning and help her mom! It gives me*
>
> *such a sense of respect and pride in that little girl* (Embracing Diversity, 1992).

Winnie Porter is more culturally, and socially literate as a result of her experience in entering the point of view of the community and students she serviced. Yet similar opportunities to participate in or analyze these types of experiences, are veritably absent from most teacher training programs. Teachers are rarely if ever encouraged to reason within cultural and economic points of view present in that of the students and parents they service. As such, they are not able to think critically nor analyze their own assumptions about their students, decide who is potentially gifted, or critically examine the implications of this lack of cultural awareness on the design of their curriculums. This of course has severe implications on the thinking opportunities they provide for their students, the issues they choose as vehicles for thinking and transforming reality, the type of questions they ask their students, the increasing pernicious tracking of students of color and newly arriving immigrants, and the overall implementation of a rich and unique critical thinking environment that benefits all regardless of race, class, or gender.

The Role of Educational Relevance and Personalized Education

Educational relevance and personalized learning must be the cornerstone of any meaningful multicultural curriculum concerned with equity. In the words of Paulo Freire the objective of the educator is defined as:

> *Their [the educators] objective shouldn't be to describe something that should be memorized. Quite the contrary, they should problematize situations, present the challenge*

> *of reality that learners confront each day* (Freire, 1985).

Freire encourages an active curriculum that involves students in thinking about reality for the purpose of acting upon it. This, of course, means critically writing about reality, critically speaking about reality, socratically questioning reality, critically reading about reality, and critically listening to diverse narratives of reality. Educators should take advantage of all opportunities to stimulate their students, even by sharing their own doubts, viewpoints, and criticisms.

Unfortunately what typically disguises itself as multicultural education does little to encourage critical thinking and exploration into self through reality or reality through self. Nor do these studies provide meaningful opportunities for informed social action and transformation. As such, as presently constructed, multicultural education is an education that is non-transformative and intellectually domesticating. It is unable to offer active life and voice to the students it purports to serve. Relegating students to mere spectators of education, multicultural educational programs as presently constructed, not only fail to invite critical multicultural discourse through dialogical and dialectical thinking, but reinforce schooling as a mere trivial pursuit divorced from the living realities of everyday life. Educators need to work with the lived experiences of their students. Many students today are experiencing a Dickensonian life of nightmarish proportions, especially in our inner cities. Dramatic social transformations in material and psychological reality including drug addiction, unemployment, inadequate opportunities, racism, sexism, dysfunctional families, teenage pregnancies, and the status of being "illegal" for some, have redefined what it means to be an educator, a student, and a citizen in today's society. Students bring legacies of oppression and resistance to our classrooms for which they seek and expect critical exploration, critical listening, and critical evaluation through radical discourse and rigorous critical analysis.

Making the lived experiences of our students the lively subject of public and private debate means offering legitimization to such experiences, thus giving those who live them affirmation and voice. It means offering critical educational opportunities for students to articulate their language, dreams, hopes, values, and encounters with others. It heralds reflection, metacognition, and insight into these experiences both on the part of students and teachers, while offering the promise of countless opportunities for critical thinking about social and personal issues. Maxine Greene commented on the role of educators when she stated:

> *I believe the teacher who is sincerely "radical" has the capacity to move his students to do their own kind of critical learning-- at higher and higher levels of complexity. I think he has the obligation to teach them the use of the cognitive tools they need, to acquaint them with the principles that structure the disciplines, and to offer the disciplines (which are modes of ordering experience, modes of sense-making) to each one as live possibility. I think he also has an obligation to present himself to his students as a questioning, fallible, searching human being (his fellow human beings); to break through the secrecy of certain specialties by engaging his students and himself in the most rigorous, open-ended thinking they-- and he-- can do* (Greene,1972).

Unfortunately what goes on within the four walls of school life does little to address the needs, goals, and lives of our changing student demographics. Texts add to this failure by generally offering the dominant narrative of reality on issues of contemporary and historical concern, thereby offering little opportunity to see the world from alternative cultural points of view. Texts suggest and provide lesson plans to teachers that require not independent thinking on behalf of students or teachers, but merely rote dissemination and memorization opportunities alienated from the discourse of everyday life. Freire points to the bankruptcy of most texts when he questions, "What meaning is there to a text that asks absurd questions and gives equally absurd answers?" (Freire, 1985) What Freire attempts to point out, is that this type of divorced instruction-- the instruction of accommodation and trivialization, of decontextualization and alienation, of subjugation and domination-- can have no appreciable effect on human growth and potential, and can certainly never act as a catalyst for transforming the human mind or world in which we live. This anaesthetized approach to learning claims *social* and *political neutrality* as the playground of educational practice. This neutrality presumes that education is not a form of *'political'* expression, but rather *generic* or *value free*. The *generic curriculum* fraudulently portends to serve as *wide appeal* to most students while conveniently shunning controversy, depersonalizing learning, and trivializing reality.

Social, economic, and cultural conflict are issues begging for acknowledgment and recognition as current reality to be taken advantage of. They provide relevant, real-life sources for the development of independent thinking, democratic decision making, and intellectual character. Unlike many popularly advocated pedagogical positions, current reality with all its complexities and contradictions, should not be renounced as too controversial or intimidating for classroom discourse (Lovin, 1988). Fixating on a curriculum devoid of conflict undermines the need to reason about issues of social and personal relevance. It reduces the role of education to that of disempowerment--a pedagogy *"divorced"* from the real world. The implications for the teacher laboring under this paradigm is that he/she works "on" students, never "with" them. Students are looked on as mere objects to be filled like receptacles, with teacher-generated, pre-digested truth. On the other hand, teachers who critically understand the role of education and society as a whole tend to work "with" students-- helping them explore the complexities of their personal and social existence relative to the social structures that exist. These educators typically provide profound opportunities for students to develop the values and dispositions of learning, encouraging them to see the relevance of learning so as to be in a position to transfer educational insights into other domains of life.

Educators concerned with relevance see education and learning as a political act, one that requires reasoning within diverse and often opposing points of view, reflective thought, theory, practice, transformation, interdisciplinary transfer of learning, and personal and social commitment. For these educators the student and the teacher are seen then, not as objects, but as a living subjects in the process of critically knowing and learning. Embracing this notion of critical learning and pedagogy, education is defined not as a vertical authoritarian imposition dictated from above, nor an alienating obligatory relationship that ends in annulment at 18 years of age--but rather an empowering journey into humanity. Understanding that the human being is creative, thoughtful, and capable of knowing, is tantamount to offering honest and empowering educational opportunities. Teachers should seek to develop high expectations for *all* of their students, to listen to their personal narratives, to enter within their subjective lives, and to have confidence in all of their abilities to develop fairminded reasoning while simultaneously maintaining a vision that they too are, or potentially can be, gifted.

Maintaining and Strengthening Bilingual Education for Newly Arriving Immigrants

For many newly arriving immigrants, the ability to enter into reasoning activities is limited by their level of English proficiency. They become marginalized and reduced within monolingual classroom life. Any critical multicultural pedagogy that is comprehensive and theoretically sound must be committed to providing bilingual education to students limited in English. This should be undertaken not simply as a transition to English, but out of respect for the cultural and linguistic heritage of the student. Without the ability to dialogue about issues of relevance, limited English speakers are far too often relegated to remedial activities and viewed as deficient in both ability and character (Gabelko, 1988). Developing literacy in primary language not only facilitates the acquisition of English reading, writing, and speaking, but contributes to superior levels of cognitive development (Krashen, 1988). Constructing effective bilingual programs that promise the acquisition of the English language without the abandonment of the primary language, is essential if we are to construct an equitable curriculum. Furthermore, the absence of such programs carries with it the promise of the virtual abandonment of the cultural and linguistic identity of the student, creating problems in student self-esteem, and assuring little appreciation among all students for bilingualism or multi-linguistic diversity.

Involving Parents and Community in the Struggle for Social Equity

Because school equity is tied to the social structures that dictate everyday life, parent involvement is imperative in the struggle for educational equity. Parents and teachers must work together in mobilizing all adults in the school, at home, and in the community to promote critical academic and social skills for all students. Parents need to be recruited not simply to act as homemakers in the classroom for student birthday parties, but as decision makers in the critical construction of an equitable educational theory and practice designed to meet the needs of their children within a democratic life. Parents must feel and see a sense of entitlement to be participants in their children's education. Familiar with alienated decision making and often blatant administrative disregard, parents need to be nourished and encouraged to help build an educational life for their children, themselves, and others. In this way the notion of the Jeffersonian vision of the "common school" becomes viable for parents as well as students. Parents and students begin to see education as a life-long commitment to social responsibility, structural transformation, and social action.

2. Prejudice Reduction: Creating Opportunities for Fairminded Critical Thinking Within Different Cultural Points of View on Contemporary and Historical Issues

The reduction of prejudice and the material reality that fosters such thinking, requires long term thinking strategies for developing fair and open-minded persons capable of challenging unfair and narrow-minded societal and institutional practices. Anything short of critical thinking as a vehicle for promoting diversity appreciation and multicultural awareness is mere reform, and can act to actually reinforce stereotypical irrational thinking and behavior. Prejudice is a process of deciding what to believe (Paul, 1990). Understanding the material conditions that give rise to prejudicial decision, thought, and action, is essential if we are to understand the irrationality of this thinking. Therefore, these conditions, both contemporary and historical, should comprise the object of study within educational institutions at all ages. Creating non-threatening dialogical and dialectical opportunities for students to examine their social and cultural assumptions concerning differences and the origins of these assumptions, allows them to examine what they think they believe in light of what others believe. The educators role becomes a questioning one--posing problems about the existential reality of students' lives and thinking to help them arrive at a more critical view of their own reality and the origins of their thought. This is quite different that merely transmitting information about others that students are told to appreciate and forced to memorize for test taking purposes.

Unfortunately, what parades as multicultural education in today's educational theory and practice fails to: foster independent thinking on issues of multicultural concerns, contribute to an appreciation and understanding of the political and social lives of students and people in general, combat pestiferous racial and sexual hatred.

For this reason these current multicultural approaches fail to incorporate critical thinking and analysis, and serve as powerful apologetic tools of reformism and domination. This article will briefly characterize these approaches and their philosophical tenets.

A Eurocentric Approach to Historical and Contemporary Reality

Centered within the narrative of the dominant perspective, a curriculum that promotes one historical and contemporary point of view at the expense of subordinate points of view, or what I term *"disenfranchised narratives,"* is not only disingenuine, but does nothing to counter the internalized myths about culture that children often absorb as they carry on their daily lives. On the contrary, this monological presentation of the dominant culture as reality, promises to forever silence the culture of the disenfranchised while advertising as truth, a depiction of people and points of view from a Eurocentric perspective. The repercussions of this Eurocentric monopolization of thought is reinforced sociocentricity, or the belief in the superiority of one culture at the expense of another. Classroom environments that display this philosophy of pedagogy are typically seeped in activities that depict only one historical point of view on issues of contemporary and social relevancy, consciously or unconsciously stereotype, fail to acknowledge differences in contemporary cultural points of view that exist among peoples of color, newly arriving immigrants, women, the disabled, and gays. As a result, the Eurocentric point of view is the ideological protector of the material conditions of cultural intolerance and domination. It is the prodigal proponent of the notion of the *significant us* and the *insignificant others*, which has so viciously and revisionistically dishonored contemporary life and history. A cursory look at recent children's literature on Christopher Columbus reveals the unauthentic supremacy of the Eurocentric viewpoint:

> *When Christopher Columbus was a child, he always wanted to be like Saint Christopher. He wanted to sail faraway places and spread the word of Christianity. Columbus marvelled at how God had changed everything for the best* (Osborne, 1987).

Or consider this passage from a still-in-print volume on Columbus proffering that he began:

> *to think that the lord had chosen him to sail west across the seas to find the riches of the east for himself and to carry the Christian faith to the heathens* (D'Aulaire, 1955).

These two illustrative examples of the dominant narrative are an attempt to propagandize the world in the interest of one point of view--the "non-heathens", usually white Europeans bent on spreading Christianic truth. These examples are not relegated to simply studies of Columbus, but can be found throughout text book treatments of historical and contemporary reality. European idealization and mythology, insidiously and dishonestly divides the world between the "heathens" on the one hand, and the "non-heathens" on the other. These texts afford children their first moral lesson in domination and subjugation. For many of today's students this becomes their first introduction to the world of foreign policy, conquest, and war. Never in these books are students encouraged to examine, explore, evaluate, synthesize, or capture the logic of the Taino Indian's narratives at the time of Columbus' landing, the narratives of the Caribe peoples, the oral histories of Amerindians, or Black slaves brought to Madeira as a result of Columbus' "discovery". Presenting students with one Eurocentric point of view which represents the dominant interests of those in control of public discourse, promises to de-democratize classroom life of all critical thinking and cripple the future, as it inadequately paints a revisionist historical truth from which to catapult to the future. It represents the tyranny of the imposition of monologue over dialogue in the name of education.

However disingenuine this approach to cultural literacy represents, the more deleterious and odious implications of such a curriculum on classroom life is that it serves to increase intolerance, prejudice, racism, and cultural disappreciation as students internalize the cultural code of oppression and subjugation. Furthermore, a Eurocentric education is essentially dehumanizing and reinforces false notions of power, supremacy, and conquest, at the expense of the disenfranchised and subordinate renderings of historical reality. For students of diverse backgrounds it represents even much more-- a revisionist decimation of their individual and cultural lives.

A Tourist Approach to Multicultural Issues or "Minority of the Month"

This approach, although laudable in its goals and in much fashion in today's public schools, rests its pedagogical assumptions regarding multicultural knowledge acquisition on the premise that exposure to other cultures will arrest prejudice development and decrease prejudicial attitudes (Byrnes, 1988). It assumes that sharing culinary experiences, artifacts from other countries, folk dances, geographical insights and international music, will arrest prejudice development, erase prejudice attitudes, and increase appreciation for diversity. Although a significant improvement from the Eurocentric notion of education, this approach inevitably deteriorates into visiting bulletin boards on specified cultural days, hosting once-a-year assemblies to celebrate minority historical biographies, studying ethnic and gender groups during pre-designated months, engaging in "units" on other cultures, and sharing geographical insights and discussions of natural resources from other countries.

The tourist approach fails to give children the one necessary opportunity they need to appreciate themselves in a world with others-- namely *reasoning about the assumptions, and claims that comprise diverse points of view on issues of contemporary and historical relevance*. By substituting "exposure" for "reasoning", students artificially engage in cultural appreciation with a possible insidious implication-- they potentially come to see other cultures as simply mere aberrations of themselves. For this reason the tourist or minority of the month approach, runs the grave danger of cultivating a sense of cultured sociocentricity. These tourist activities actually carry the dangerous tendency for further stereotyping cultures as they are often viewed only in an "era of nostalgia and anecdotal romanticism," such as current studies of the American Indian or peoples of the Rainforest. We are never invited to enter into the contemporary points of view of the inhabitants of the Rainforest or the points of view of Amerindian culture. Students rarely examine the logic that fuels these frames of references from diverse cultures, the assumptions that drive them, or how these cultures reach conclusions and decisions on issues of social and personal relevance. They are viewed instead as "museum pieces", historical aberrations of days gone by, to be anthropologically studied outside the realm of our own cultural assumptions about life, outside our historical struggles, and outside our thoughtful experiences.

Centering a multicultural philosophy of education on holidays, historical dates, and quaint and exotic excursions into nostalgic episodes of the lives of others, is not only patronizing to the peoples and cultures under study, but disconnects the reality of diversity from students' concrete existence. It does this precisely because of its proclivity to present the reality of culture and diversity as quaint historical deviation.

Prejudice must be understood not as an aberration of the human mind, but as an abdication of human reasoning. Only critically constructed reasoning activities, not simply superficial exposure, can eradicate sociocentric/racist attitudes and provide a rich meaningful curriculum directed at social and personal empowerment through self-reflection. This certainly is not an argument against providing meaningful cultural experiences to students. Rather it's an exhortation for a movement beyond the self-serving, dominant, condescending curriculum-- into the realm of critical cultural reasoning.

A critical examination and analysis of both the Eurocentric and Tourist approach to multiculturalism reveals their inherent bankruptcy. Neither approach promotes critical thinking about issues of race and culture. Nowhere in these approaches are students encouraged to confront historical or contemporary problems of a political and social nature that would engage them in dialogical and dialectical examination, analysis, synthesis, or informed social action. If we want students to engage in *metacognition*, (the monitoring and constant retooling of their thinking through reflection and self-criticism), then we need to construct a curriculum rich in reasoning-- a curriculum that promises relevancy, controversy, problem posing, and the exchange of cultural points of view. Without reasoning opportunities, multicultural education is relegated to didactically memorizing cultural facts and trivialities, and reduces to the level of ineffectiveness and self-delusion. On the other hand, reasoning within diverse points of view on contemporary issues of social and political concerns, allows students to develop insight into when they might be reasoning ego or sociocentrically, when they are constructing false justifications for their own self-serving perceptions and beliefs, and when these beliefs and justifications are supported by the historical record.

3. Reasoning Multiculturally to Understand the Common Struggle for Human Dignity and the Logic of Oppression.

Valuing diversity is learning to reason within and about different cultural, social, historical, and economic points of view. A critical multicultural literacy that recognizes, promotes, and accelerates giftedness through reasoning, must also value what unites us as human beings in the common quest for humanity. Students need opportunities to see the interconnectedness and similarities of human life. What unites us as human beings is equally as important as that which defines our differences as people. The common struggle for humanity at once leads to the recognition of the role of domination and subjugation in the dehumanization of political and personal life.

As written in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all of us as global inhabitants share the goals of human dignity and self determination (United Nations, 1948). Helping students critically examine and analyze differences and similarities in the historical struggle for self determination, personal freedom, and social justice should be a fundamental component of a critical multicultural literacy. Catherine Christie, a kindergarten-second grade combination teacher in Los Angeles described this necessity aptly:

> *Essentially all our students are immigrants, so you'd think that there would be a common thread. But sometimes it is not so easy for them to see it. Our students who come from Armenia are considered to be fleeing a repressive communist regime. They're given resettlement allowances, money by our government. Sitting next to them is somebody from El Salvador or Guatemala, who left because their uncle was shot while standing with them on a street corner. They've walked across countries and across borders to get here. They come here and their mother work as cleaning ladies for minimal pay and they're living next store or sitting next someone who's come and is being given a resettlement allowance and housing help. One of my biggest challenges is getting these two groups to see themselves more similar than different* (Embracing Diversity, 92).

Socratically questioning these students about the similarities as well as the differences in their social and personal lives, requires long term reasoning activities designed to confront the contradiction of their social reality. This social reality must be objectively and critically analyzed, evaluated, and synthesized for purposes of uncovering the logic of commonalty and disparity in the current reality of these students. Reasoning within disparate cultural points of view should be carried on in the interest of human unity. Students and teachers should embark on the quest of unmasking not simply the common human struggle for authenticity and validity, but engage in the critical analysis of exploitation, oppression, and domination so evident in the lives of many students and in history as a whole. Individual and social freedom can only be realized in a common unified struggle for liberty and justice, and the recognition of the *logic* of oppression and domination that orchestrates much of our social structures and personal lives. Often students and teachers are so submerged in the reality of everyday life, that they rarely reflect on the logic that serves the interests of the dominant order--a logic whose image and thoughts they have often internalized. Understanding the voices of struggle and oppression that comprise the political, social, and economic reality of our human history, will add meaning and critical consciousness to human beings in the process of knowing and transformation.

Conclusion

This paper argues for a critical multicultural literacy founded on principles of fairminded critical thinking about and within diverse cultural points of view. It inherently encompasses hope, love for humanity, an understanding for the necessity of unity between peoples, humility, and belief in the power of reason, human reflection, and action. Furthermore, the article calls specific attention to the role of democratic life and educational equity as necessary conditions to implementing a critical multicultural curriculum in the service of all students. Citizenship education for a pluralistic democratic society should be concerned with the need to develop citizens who think independently and fairmindedly about issues of race, gender, culture, age, and disability. Furthermore it should be an education for personal and social empowerment that leads to constructive praxis informed by critical theory and practice. Proclaiming, implementing, and supporting a philosophy of critical literacy will advance personal and social freedom. Constructing a society based on egalitarianism and democracy, both economic and political, will help assure the construction of an educational system that guarantees that all students are afforded the benefit of a critical multicultural pedagogy, and that those gifted or potentially gifted students among peoples of color and newly arriving immigrant cultures, will not be lost to pernicious tracking practices, or placed in remedial classes owed solely to their gender, color of their skin, sexual preference or ability to speak the English language.

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JOURNEYS INTO DIFFERENCE: THE POLITICS AND PEDAGOGY OF PREJUDICE

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Introduction

This workshop will attempt to provide a concrete example of what Giroux means by "border pedagogy" (Giroux,1992) and will make suggestions for how "border pedagogy" might be translated into classroom practice. The article will provide a case study to be used in the service of "border pedagogy" providing the vehicle through which critical inquiry can occur. Much work has been done in articulating the need for critical pedagogy, but not enough suggestions for how critical pedagogy might translate itself out into classroom practice - what materials can be used, what kinds of questions are best to stimulate critical inquiry of the type that critical pedagogy is interested in engaging.

According to Giroux, border pedagogy encompasses two central concepts: difference and counter-memory, inviting "dialogue among a variety of voices as they struggles within asymmetrical relations of power" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p.116) and addressing how "difference is constructed through various representations and practices that name, legitimate, marginalize and exclude the cultural capital and the voices of subordinate groups " (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p.128). Border pedagogy questions the omissions and tensions that exist between what he calls "master narratives" or the voice of the status quo and the self representations of subordinate groups as they might appear in forgotten or erased histories, texts, memories, experiences and community narratives" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p.128). Border pedagogy speaks to the need to create pedagogical conditions in which students become "border crossers" in order to understand "otherness" and learn to speak and listen to many voices and ways of understanding the world. It also points to ways in which "master narratives based on white, patriarchal and class specific versions of the work can be challenged critically and effectively deterritorialized (Giroux, 1992, p. 31). It offers students the opportunity to engage the multiple references that constitute different cultural codes, experiences and languages. This means learning to "read" these cultural codes historically and critically as well as learning what delimits them. This knowledge would then be utilized in the construction and deconstruction of one's own narratives and histories. Ultimately, what Giroux is saying is that we should engage knowledge as "border crossings" moving in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and power.

This work will present a case study about an incident of inter-racial conflict, one involving multiple interpretations - exemplifying both a "master narrative" as Giroux calls the voice of institutionalized reason and a "counter narrative", the voice of someone who has been marginalized by this institutionalized reason. The case study is meant to provide an example of what "border pedagogy" might look like in concrete form. It presents a model for how the issue of racism can be explored in a classroom situation and demonstrate the kind of critical discourse that could be generated about a case such as this one.

The case study under consideration looks at a letter to the editor written by Mr. Lauzon, a white, Francophone male, director of a police station, in response to a column written by black male, Anglophone columnist, Clifton Ruggles, describing an incident involving a disputed parking spot in which he alleges that a white, Francophone woman grabbed him by the lapels of his jacket, hurled racial insults at him and then proceeded to falsely accuse him of assaulting her. The police were summoned and a complaint was made by the woman against Mr. Ruggles which was subsequently dropped. Ruggles, however, proceeded to lodge his own complaint against this woman on the grounds that it was she who had assaulted him both physically and mentally and had put both his life and that of his six year old daughter who was with him at the time, at risk.

Lauzon interpreted the intent of Ruggles's column as an attack on the police and consequently wrote a letter to the editor in which he endeavors to explain what he calls "the police point of view". In doing so, he presents an account of the incident which casts doubt on Ruggles's report of the event.

Lauzon's letter became a "case célèbre" in Montreal. The Montreal Gazette devoted three weeks to publishing letters to the editor commenting on Lauzon's letter. Among these letters was one from an eye witness, Harold Spanier, who corroborated Ruggles' account of the events. Particularly disturbing was his claim that the police refused to allow him to make a statement, resulting in his having to go to the police station on his own accord and overcome attempts to dissuade him from filing an eye witness report.

I will present a close examination of Lauzon's response to the Ruggles' column and examine what might have motivated and directed his response. I will examine how personal prejudice and institutional power might have affected both his reading and understanding of Ruggles' column as well as his response to it.

This case study provides the basis for students to analyze critically what Giroux calls "the forms of intelligibility, interests, and moral and political considerations that different voices embody" (Giroux, 1990, p. 183). Lauzon's account is representative of a set of underlying interests that shape how a particular narrative is to be told. This account is situated within relations of power that in turn will determine how information is understood, processed and communicated. An examination of Lauzon's account can help students uncover and demystify how claims to knowledge come into being and how they can distort reality. Ruggles' account can be viewed as an example of what Giroux would call "dangerous memory" - testimonials of oppression that "keep alive the memory of human suffering along with forms of knowledge and struggles in which such suffering was shaped and contested" (Giroux, 1992). Giroux sees the presentation of these accounts as essential ingredients of a "pedagogy of possibility" which attempts to help students acquire their own "voice" and which places the experiences that students bring to the classroom at the forefront of the educational agenda. This case study can be seen as a model of the kind of discourse that students can begin to initiate on their own.

I will also attempt to demonstrate how the skills and dispositions of critical thinking (Paul, 1990) might be utilized in the service of border pedagogy. Critical thinking is defined here as the "self correcting application of skillful reasonable thinking based on explicit criteria and sensitive to the particulars of the context in which it is applied" (Weinstein, 1991). It refers to the ability to reflect on the assumptions underlying our customary, habitual ways of thinking and acting. It consists of identifying and challenging the assumptions that underlie the ideas, beliefs, values we take for granted. It consists of an awareness of and reflection upon how context shapes what we consider "normal" and "natural" ways of thinking and living. It involves imagining and exploring alternatives to supposedly fixed belief systems. Identifying and challenging assumptions is central to critical thinking, as is challenging the taken-for-granted common sense notions about how we live in the world, how we interact in relationships.

Analysis of Lauzon's Response

Lauzon's letter leaves out important information that is relevant to the proper understanding of the event. Conspicuous by its absence is any mention of the racial incident that precipitated the affair. While he does not applaud the woman's provocative racist remarks nor her physical attack on Ruggles, neither does he seem to think they are worth mentioning. Nor does he inform us that she had falsely accused Ruggles of assaulting her. Lauzon merely tells us that:

> *Ruggles admitted to taking the parking place of the victim and added she reacted very bitterly and adamantly.*

Note that Ruggles never admitted to "taking the parking spot of the victim". What Ruggles says instead is that he

> *hadn't noticed the dark car double parked up ahead. There were no flashing lights indicating the driver"s intentions. As soon as I got out of my car the female occupant of this vehicle approached me in a rage, insisting I had taken her spot. I explained that I wouldn't be very long, that I was merely picking up my daughter from her gymnastics class. The woman grabbed me by the lapels and proceeded to hurl racial insults at me: maudi negre, barbre, sauvage chien sale.*

Because Lauzon left out so much necessary information it is difficult for a reader to understand the framework within which this confrontation occurred. By leaving out information that is necessary to a proper understanding of the events that led up to Ruggles lodging formal charges, he renders Ruggles's account lacking in credibility. Is it that Lauzon doesn't consider the woman's racist remarks important to the case or is he choosing not to focus on it because then he can then proceed to view Ruggles as the troublemaker? Note how twice in the letter Lauzon chastises Ruggles for having instigated the incident:

> *It is to be noted that Mr. Ruggles is himself responsible concerning this incident and the judicial procedures occurred when he insisted that legal actions be taken.*

and the conclusion of the letter when he says:

> *I would appreciate it if you would publish this letter so that the population may be made aware of the police view regarding the incident incited by Mr. Ruggles.*

For those who did not read the initial article, it would seem indeed odd that Ruggles would be pressing charges against someone who merely "reacted bitterly and adamantly" after having her parking spot taken. In leaving out the woman's verbal and physical attack as well as her attempt to have Ruggles arrested, the entire motive for Ruggles pressing charges against her is lost. Lauzon does not address the fact that the woman had attempted to use the judicial system for racist ends. He is much more interested in seeing Ruggles as the instigator of the incident even in the face of overwhelming evidence - the eye witness report as well as the report from his own police officers who vindicated Ruggles of any wrongdoing. Lauzon himself said that his police officers told Ruggles that "his story was not only plausible, but most probably what had happened and wrote it in the report." Yet despite this information, Lauzon continues to pursue the idea that Ruggles was the instigator. Lauzon tells us nothing of the racism that precipitated the affair, yet he informs us that Ruggles "did spit on the car in his own anger." We are never told what Ruggles was reacting to, what made him angry enough to spit, thus he is left looking like an aggressive troublemaker. According to the eye witness, Ruggles was most cooperative, most obliging, to the point of actually moving his car to give the woman the space. Lauzon has the choice of seeing Ruggles as someone whose dignity was trampled and who had no other means of expressing his disgust than spitting at an inanimate object, or he can choose to view the spitting as an act divorced from its context. It appears he did the latter.

It is interesting that despite Ruggles' confirmed innocence by his own police officers, Lauzon continues to use loaded language to characterize Ruggles as the "suspect" and describes the entrance to his daughter's gym as "the direction in which the suspect fled". The use of the word "fled" was totally unnecessary but effective in conveying the required nefarious intention to Ruggles's actions. Ruggles did not know the police had been called, therefore he could not have "fled". Fleeing implies attempting to get away from someone. Ruggles had merely gone to pick up his daughter - information which he had given the lady and information which had been conveyed to the police by the eye witness whom they encountered sitting in Ruggles' car. Throughout Lauzon's letter he accusingly refers to Ruggles as the "suspect" and the woman as "the victim". He does not call her the "complainant" or even the "alleged victim". Lauzon's choosing to see her as the "victim," while all evidence points to the contrary, shows us that his irrational prejudices blinded him. Because he was prejudiced *for* his own assumptions, he actually misread his own police officer's report. It should be noted that the original police report, which I have obtained a copy of, refers to Ruggles as the "victim" and the woman as the "suspect". Interestingly enough, even the police officers who filed the report and who were seemingly convinced of Ruggles's innocence in the affair, had trouble retaining the distinction as to who was the "victim" and who was the "suspect". In one part of the report they write:

> *The suspect held the suspect by the neck.*

One wonders whether seeing a black man as the victim in an incident with a white woman was just too difficult for them to imagine. Was their willingness to vilify him so great it could not be held in check, even by contrary evidence? The question is: was this merely an unconscious slip, an error made in the haste of filling out the report or does it have greater significance?

One would have to assume that Lauzon was not in a rush when he wrote the letter to the editor. He had time to read the police report, speak to his officers before launching a public statement. One would assume that a man in his position of responsibility would have availed himself of whatever documents existed as evidence upon which to base his arguments. Lauzon also chooses to inform the public that Ruggles was the "object of a criminal investigation which was warranted". This terminology, in face of Ruggles' immediate vindication seems highly inappropriate. I would venture to suggest that perhaps the only reason for Lauzon to use this terminology at all was to cloud the issue and create in the public's mind an association of blacks with crime.

Another possible explanation for the victim/suspect confusion might be gender related. What were the assumptions that guided Lauzon's thinking in respect to gender? Might it be that because she was a woman that Lauzon had difficulty imagining her as the "suspect"? Is it because Ruggles was a man that Lauzon had difficulty envisioning him as the "victim"? This case defies our notions of who"assaults" and who "gets assaulted" and what it is to assault somebody. It is highly likely that if Ruggles had acted in the exact same manner to the woman as she had to him, that is, grabbing her by her lapels and hurling insults at her, there would be no question that some form of assault had taken place. But because it was a woman assaulting a man, because it was a reversal of roles, the situation is less clear. Usually physical aggressivity is associated with males and not females and it might be this gender stereotyping that affected Lauzon's response. Ruggles acknowledges the role gender might play in this affair when he wrote that:

> *she is a white, French-speaking Canadian female...well dressed, driving an expensive car with a cellular phone, with which she dialled 911.*

It is interesting to see how Lauzon downplays the presence of the eye witness. He makes casual reference to a witness but does not say whether he corroborated Ruggles story or not. One has to presume he has, otherwise the police would not have considered Ruggles's story credible. Here is how Lauzon makes mention of the presence of the eye witness:

> *Mr. Ruggles also said he had a witness in his car. The policemen listened to Mr. Ruggles, took down his name along with his version of events".*

This contrasts dramatically with Ruggles's account as well as that of the eye witness. Here is how Ruggles described it:

> *When Harold insisted on giving his eye-witness account of the events, he was rudely told to be quiet.*

Harold Spanier elaborates what happened in a letter to the editor:

> *When I asked to know what was going on, the officers threatened to take me to the station and charge me as an "accomplice to the charge of assault". When I asked to make an eye witness statement, they disregarded my request. I had to go down of my own accord to the police station and overcome attempts to dissuade me before being able to file my testimony.*

Note the vagueness in Lauzon's reference to the eye-witness. Lauzon's statement, "Ruggles said he had a witness", implies that it may be hearsay and not a verifiable fact. It is also not clear whether he means that the police took down the eye witness's name and version of events or whether it was Ruggles's name and version of the events that they took down. It appears that the latter is the case but the former is implied. Once again, is this merely a grammatical mistake or is he being purposely vague so as to avoid confronting the charge that his officers may have acted inappropriately.

At one point in his article Ruggles makes the observation that by calling the police under false pretences the woman,

> *wasted taxpayers money as well as valuable police time...*

Yet Lauzon manages to misread this obvious criticism directed at the woman and interprets the comment to be a criticism of the police:

> *Mr. Ruggles complained of the formality of this dossier and the high costs resulting from police interventions.*

Reading is not a neutral activity. It is a purposeful activity. We read with intent, and our reading is imbued with prior meanings and prior associations. How we read and what we choose to understand of what we read is a function of our prior conditioning and our world view as well as our capacity to read critically, fair mindedly and empathetically. Sometimes our world view and our vested interests prevent us from reading correctly or perceiving correctly what we read, hear or see.

Let's examine how Lauzon further manages to devalue and ignore the viewpoint that informs Ruggles perspective.

Lauzon shows no understanding of Ruggles's insistence on pressing charges against the woman. He tells us that "similar dossiers are usually filed without accusations and charges often not laid". He exhibits no understanding of the meaning and significance that Ruggles attaches to the incident and chastises him for inciting further trouble. Lauzon either ignores or trivializes Ruggles's concern over what might have transpired under a different set of circumstances as idle conjecture. "Instead of making alarming hypotheses" is how Lauzon describes Ruggles's concern with what might have been if he had reacted any differently and had not been able to diffuse the situation as he did. Ruggles's concern was that another less articulate black person, or one that wasn't able to make themselves heard would likely have ended up in jail. His "what if" scenarios are appropriate precisely because they reflect the reality that many blacks confront when they interface with the police. Lauzon does not take into account that from the perspective of a black person living in North America, it is not at all unreasonable to feel terribly at risk in such a set of circumstances. It can be argued that Ruggles's "what if" scenarios are most relevant in his decision to take the woman to court. He assessed the possible damage that such an incident could have caused and it outraged him. He felt he had a responsibility to pursue the matter in order to sensitize the public and prevent such occurrences from happening again. The fact that he was able to convince the police of his innocence does not detract from his being concerned about the potential danger that such a situation could have resulted in for other blacks. He can envision someone being so angered or so intimidated by the situation that he or she is provoked. He is not merely engaging in idle conjecture, what he is doing is putting himself in the shoes of another. Perhaps one of the most blatant of Lauzon's distortions is his claim that Ruggles was:

> *exaggerating about being brought to Station 31 to spend the night in a holding pen.*

Lauzon does not understand the speculative nature of Ruggles's writing. Ruggles muses about what might have transpired under a different set of circumstances:

> *I wonder how events might have turned out had I been less articulate, less controlled, if*

> *I did not have a witness who happened to be white and if I had dared to register an ounce of the outrage I felt. I tend to think that I would have spent the night in the holding pen at Station 31, if not worse.*

Nowhere did Ruggles actually claim he was taken down to the Station or arrested. Anyone who had not read Ruggles' column would assume that Ruggles had lied. Lauzon hopes to weaken Ruggles' position and discredit him in the public eye - a variation on the old homonym fallacy -or attack the individual rather than his ideas.

The example that highlights the different ways in which Ruggles and Lauzon perceive the same event is their response to Ruggles's refusal to get into the police car for questioning. For Ruggles getting into the car carried the stigma of being treated as a suspect. Plus, he may have felt more comfortable being out in the open where his conversation could be overheard by witnesses as opposed to being closeted in the police car where he might be victimized. Is Ruggles being paranoid in not assuming good will on the part of the Montreal police force or is he being reasonably cautious? In a previous column - "Growing up Black: the Differences Aren't Always Subtle", Ruggles recounts numerous incidents of police racism directed at him:

> *There had been some trouble in the neighbourhood involving some black youths. I was on my way home from work when suddenly a police cruiser almost knocked me over while swerving on the curb to block my path. Two policemen jumped out of the car demanding to know what I was carrying. "Work clothes," I explained politely. One cop threw me against the car. The other wrestled the bag from my arms, emptying the contents on the sidewalk. Seeing there was indeed nothing intimidating in the bag, they shoved it back into my arms, got back in their car and sped off. No apologies were made. No effort was made to help me retrieve the contents of my bag. It made no difference to them that I was innocent. By virtue of my blackness I was guilty.*

> *On another occasion I was on a bus when a skirmish occurred between a black youth and a white youth. When the police arrived, they herded all the blacks off the bus and took them to the station. No questions asked to determine who was actually involved. Not one of the white youths was detained. Surely a few properly addressed questions would have solved the mystery as to who was indeed guilty. How necessary was it to arrest all the black youths? Was this a conscious or unconscious act of racism? Whatever the motivation, the results were the same. We were turned into suspects. We were guilty by virtue of our blackness.*

> *In every facet of your life you are seen as undesirable, unworthy of the same rights and privileges as white counterparts. Color sets the criterion for your interactions in the world. And it is the color of your skin that condemns you.*

And elsewhere in that column:

> *A white person grows up taking for granted that one has fundamental rights, freedom of speech and of assembly. that one is innocent until proven guilty. As a black person, the reverse is true, you live your life as a suspect. The police suspect you, store owners suspect you, school officials suspect you* (*The Gazette*, September 5, 1992.)

Ruggles's own experiences and the experiences of other Blacks count as evidence upon which Ruggles bases his assessment of the current situation he finds himself in. He has little reason to believe that he would be treated fairly once inside the police cruiser. Quite to the contrary. He has every reason to fear it. In the past three years, four black men had been shot by Montreal police officers and relations between the police and the black community had been particularly tenuous. Anthony Griffin, who was alleged to have been running from custody when he was shot. His offence was stiffing a cabbie on a taxi fare. Presley Leslie was shot while being subdued by a half-dozen offers inside a nightclub. Leslie is alleged to have had a gun and to have fired a shot or shots inside the club. Marcellus Francois was shot by a SWAT team sergeant in a case of mistaken identity. Seymour Fletcher was alleged to have committed suicide by shooting himself in the head while being arrested. From Lauzon's point of view, getting into the car was "standard operating procedure." He sees Ruggles's insistence on remaining on the street as a sign of insubordination. He doesn't show any sensitivity to how Ruggles may have perceived the situation. He reports that the lady cooperated by getting into the police car to give her statement, yet chastises Ruggles for his refusal to be as "co-operative". From the lady's point of view, getting into the police car held no negative connotations. She had nothing to fear. She was, after all, the one who had called the police and was herself part of the dominant culture. As Ruggles pointed out in this column, she was white and French - speaking like the police officers themselves, appeared to be well-do-do, as evidenced by her clothing and the expensive automobile she drove, thus positioning her in the privileged "in" group. Ruggles felt like the "outsider" he was perceived to be.

One of the ways in which Lauzon tries to promote his own credibility is by repeating every nuance of information pertaining to the apprehension of the so-called "suspect" -providing details about which police car responded at what time, and went in which direction. This kind of detailed information succeeds in giving the aura of police professionalism to the whole affair and in establishing Lauzon as the paradigm of objectivity. We tend to want to believe whatever else he says because somehow he has established, by the presentation of these facts, that he is the authority in possession of all pertinent data pertaining to this case. He is the expert. He is the authority. It is ironic that he devoted several paragraphs regarding the exact details of the comings and goings of the police cruisers but does not provide any pertinent details about the verbal and physical assault on Ruggles or the comments his officers made to the eye witness.

Lauzon was so preoccupied with defending police conduct that he failed to properly understand the intent of the article or the tone in which it was written. He read selectively, paying attention to his own biasness and rummaging for self-justifying evidence, noticing only that which pertained directly to the conduct of the police, ignoring totally the actions of the woman, clearly the perpetrator of trouble in this whole affair. In doing this he ignored the other issues at stake - the woman's attempt to abuse the law enforcement apparatus and the potential for harm that her actions may have led to.

Conspicuous by its absence in Lauzon's response is the one criticism levied against his officers - that of their coming to ask for the whereabouts of the "black guy". For Ruggles, this comment indicated that the police had preconceived notions about him and these notions placed him in potential danger. Referring to him being black was not merely a descriptive term, but rather one that carries a lot of baggage in this society. Transcripts of conversations that took place in the police cruisers just before the fatal shooting of Marcellus Francois, an innocent black man who had no other similarity to a known felon other than his also being black, indicated that the police officers made many disparaging references to the suspect being black. It was the colour they chose to focus on at the exclusion of all other telling characteristics including height and weight. There actually was a tremendous discrepancy between the two men which went undetected because blackness was the overriding concern, once again demonstrating that one uses information selectively, choosing not to see and not to notice what does not reinforce one's view, what is not in keeping with one's ideological perspective. Lauzon does make a vague reference at one point to the fact that his police officers had a "mental picture as to what was possibly happening" upon receiving the 911 call, but this reference obscures rather than sheds light on the issue.

Overcoming Prejudice

Overcoming prejudice is indeed difficult because, as Weinstein reports, even experiences that disconfirm prejudices are stress-inducing because these experiences conflict with one's prior belief system. To be proven wrong, creates tension, anxiety and lack of self-esteem. This anxiety Weinstein points out, is caused by prior expectations as well as by relative unfamiliarity and lack of confidence in the reliability of those expectations to serve as predictors of behaviour. Lauzon's experiences told him that blacks behave in certain predictable ways. Yet this particular case contradicted those experiences. So as to minimize cognitive dissonance and deal with this contradiction, he re-constructed the facts of the case to "fit" his preconceived notions.

This case exemplifies the problem articulated by Paul and Adamson (1990) that prejudice is more than an error in thinking, more than a deficit to be ameliorated. Paul presents two arguments - that prejudice is not an abberation of a logical mind but the product of an illogical mind and that we tend to be prejudiced for what we believe. Complex personal, political, economic factors enter into it. Prejudices are deeply ingrained, the product of years of effective social conditioning. We tend to construct self serving accounts of reality and see only those aspects of reality that are reinforcing to our point of view and find it difficult to reason within points of view different from our own. We are emotionally attached to our prejudices and hold onto them even in the face of overwhelming contradictory evidence. We are experts in "selective perception", in constructing a self serving account of reality, one that sees only those aspects of reality that are reinforcing to our point of view. World views are powerful constructs that have a truth, logic and rationality all of their own making.

Selective perception distorts our thinking and creates barriers to effective thought. We have all had the experience of hearing some sounds, but not others; seeing some events, but missing others altogether. We imbue some aspects of an event with more importance than we do other aspects of it. Because of the manner in which we have been socialised, there are some ideas that simply will not dawn on us and there are other ideas that dominate our brain circuitry, influencing our behaviour and our attitudes. Prejudicial thinking is very difficult to reroute once it has taken hold. Uncritical thinking becomes a way of life. We internalize the myths and values of the particular culture in which we were raised and we do not engage in ego or sociocentric critique. We become echoes of the voices of our past. We take it for granted that our own version of reality is the only correct one, that our way of interpreting the world is the one true and right way and that all others are inferior to it. Our very identity becomes shaped by thought and experiences grounded in prejudice which were uncritically formed at an early age and retained and defended as prejudices in our adult lives. It is for this reason that Weinstein says that prejudice is more than simply an error in thinking. Prejudice is not necessarily something abnormal or atypical, not something outside the normal mechanisms of thought, desire and action. That is why it is difficult to eradicate.

Prejudice then, can be seen as a form of cultural conditioning, a system of practices and a way of life that includes "maps of meaning" which makes things intelligible to those who subscribe to them. These "maps of meaning" mediate the processes through which an individual becomes a social being and the manner in which reality is experienced, understood and interpreted. People tend to become emotionally attached to their prejudices and hold on to them even in the face of overwhelming contrary evidence, as we have seen in the case of Lauzon. Prejudice serves powerful motives and interests within ourselves and in our society. These powerful feelings often defy even the power of logic.

Anti-racist Pedagogy

Anti racist education requires exposure to diversity, particularly to diverse points of view that exemplify a multiplicity of responses and perspectives. For those whose prejudice we hope to reduce or eliminate, coming in contact with diverse viewpoints, understanding the meaning and significance that different cultural groups attach to their experience may be a first step in a long journey to overcoming some of their prejudices. Exposing them to some of the inconsistencies inherent in their own thinking may have some effect in opening a small door, that, through further encounters may open even wider. For those who are the victims of racism and oppression, an anti-racist education can help them learn to articulate the conditions of their oppression. In so doing, they help create "counter-narratives," as Giroux calls the testimonials of those who have been subjugated and marginalized. Ruggles's account, in essence, can be seen as an example of one such counter narrative, expressing as it does, what it is to be discriminated against, what significance he attaches to certain experiences that have helped form how he views the world and consequently how he responds to it. Articulating the concrete terms of one's oppression can be viewed as an empowering experience for the individual involved, as well as providing valuable insights to others. Cultivating the skill of creating "counter-narratives" in either oral or written form, should certainly be part of "border pedagogy". Everyday life is fraught with experiences that could be articulated and problematized. Problematizing everyday life is a way of overcoming one's feelings of helplessness, giving a voice to the otherwise voiceless and powerless, acknowledging that their perceptions have value and significance and are worth communicating.

Henry Giroux has identified what he considers to be some of the necessary aspects of an anti-racist pedagogy which falls under the broader category of "border pedagogy". He believes that it should provide students with the opportunity to:

> *engage the multiple references that constitute different cultural codes, experiences and languages. This means providing the learning opportunities for students to become media literate in a world of changing representations. It means offering students the knowledge and social relations that enable them to read critically not only how cultural texts are regulated by various discursive codes but also how such texts express and represent different ideological interests. In this case, border pedagogy establishes conditions of learning that define literacy inside the categories of power and authority. This suggests developing pedagogical practices that address texts as social and historical constructions. It also suggests developing pedagogical practices that allow students to analyze texts in terms of their presences and absences and most important, such practices should provide students with the opportunity to read texts dialogically through a configuration of many voices, some of which offer up resistance, some of which provide support* (Giroux, 1992).

According to Giroux students should be taught how to deconstruct and critically interrogate the "master narratives of racism", and learn how these narratives contribute to the marginalization of certain groups in society and how they serve to perpetuate oppression and human suffering. In Ruggles' account we see examples of what Giroux refers to as the ways in which "difference and resistance are concretely expressed" and in Lauzon's account we see the hidden ways in which "master narratives" construct their own self-serving accounts of reality that succeeds in excluding, subordinating and marginalizing others. According to Giroux, a very important component of an anti-racist pedagogy should be making evident how "white domination colonizes definitions of the normal". Lauzon's letter is a superb example of the dominant ideology at work redefining and recasting reality to suit its own ends.

A critical anti-racist education should help students discover how to critically analyze the "metaphors" that govern their thoughts and hence define their reality, help them learn to interrogate the language, ideas and relations inherent in the logic of prejudice, help them understand the way in which their own particular world view came into being and the manner in which it manifests itself in their everyday lives, how meaning and knowledge are socially constructed and subject to multiple interpretation. Most importantly perhaps, an anti-racist education should, to use Giroux's words, teach students to understand how power as a cultural, economic and political set of practices works to define, organize and legitimize notions of "common sense" which we internalize under the auspices of rationality. Expanding our conceptual framework involves working through the framework of interpretations of the world we have uncritically amassed both logically and psychologically and generating, assessing our own perspectives. The Lauzon-Ruggles case is important because it provides an example of a missed opportunity for "dialogue across differences". Ruggles's commentary could have been used by Lauzon to help broaden and enrich his own as well as the police department's understanding of the concerns of black males in Montreal. This knowledge would help them incorporate a more complex and multifaceted approach. This, however, would necessitate a critical look at the assumptions that underlie policing as well as raising questions about the institution itself, who it serves, how it serves it and why.

There is no doubt that dialogue is important in prejudice reduction because it can help address if not entirely reduce the misunderstandings often associated with prejudice. However, not all dialogue is equally valuable. Honourable intentions alone are not enough to alter the cognitive structures necessary to reduce prejudice. One must learn how to dialogue, one must learn the procedures that enable meaningful dialogue to occur. What does this kind of dialogue look like? Matthew Lipman's definition of critical thinking is applicable here. Productive dialogue should incorporate the criteria one is using, it should be sensitive to the context in which the dialogue is occurring and it should be self corrective, in other words it should question itself. Dialogue for dialogue's sake is not enough because it will not challenge the prevailing modes of viewing a situation. Learning critical modes of dialogue can help somewhat in penetrating the logic of racism by challenging some of the bases upon which it is constructed. It is premised ultimately on the belief that reasonable thought is an ideal that is both worth pursuing and possible to pursue despite the obstacles facing it.

Case studies such as the one presented here can have some influence in making students aware of the ways in which racism sometimes manifests itself in subtle, non-obvious, yet very deadly ways. The case study provides students with the opportunity to understand how perspectives are constructed and how and why they differ. Being able to understand someone else's perspective can have the effect of enabling students to connect in a meaningful way with the views of someone they may not agree with. It is important to note that merely learning the skills of critical analysis is not enough to reduce prejudice, which as I have stated before, is more than an error in thinking, more than simply a deficit to be ameliorated through proper instruction. Good thinking skills are important, however, what is equally important is acquiring what Paul calls the dispositions associated with good thinking - intellectual fairmindedness, intellectual courage, intellectual humility. Prejudice reduction begins with active critical listening and with respect for accurately clarifying and understanding the views we oppose. It is only once the students have developed these dispositions that they are able to engage in detailed critical analysis that can begin to challenge the foundations of racist thought and practice.

Anti-racist education must occur in what Matthew Lipman calls a "community of inquiry" where "students listen to one another with respect, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist each other in drawing inferences from what has been said, and seek to identify one another's assumptions" (Lipman, 1991).

A teacher in an alternative school for high school drop outs who had established one such community of inquiry in doing Philosophy for Children with his students reports an encounter that took place when a new student who identified himself as a "confirmed racist" joined the class which was 40% black. Instead of ostracizing him, the black students began probing him about his racist beliefs. They asked him questions like "When did it first begin? Did you have any bad experiences with blacks that might account for your racism? Were your parents racist?" What amazed the teacher was the fact that the student responded openly and honestly to the questions posed. He sensed that the questions were being asked in good faith and he responded in kind. He was not being criticized, he was being asked to explain the views he held -why and how he came to hold these views. There was something that moved him, that made him respond favourably without the usual defence mechanism. By the end of the semester he had developed a very close friendship with one of the black students and this experience, more than anything else contributed to altering his racist beliefs.

In order for a community of inquiry to be effective in altering cognitive structures, there has to be a certain level of trust. If students don't trust each other, if they don't trust the teacher or the context in which the "community of inquiry" is held, they won't risk the kind of self disclosure that prejudice reduction requires. Beyond a "community of inquiry", what anti-racist education requires is, to use Fred Newman's term "a school wide culture of thoughtfulness" which extends beyond the classroom and is reinforced elsewhere in the school.

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ASSESSMENT AND REMEDIATION OF COGNITIVE SKILLS: COMBINING THE THEORIES OF FEUERSTEIN AND FREIRE.

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Introduction

Context is very important, so I'd like to begin by sharing some information which will help you know how I see myself. I'm going to read you the definition of a "radicalteacher" which appears on the back cover of a journal by that name. A "radicalteacher" is:

1. *one who provides a student-rather than teacher-centred classroom; nonauthoritarian.*
2. *one who shares rather than transmits information.*
3. *one who aids in student growth and empowerment by drawing out what is already there and latent.*
4. *one who respects students.*
5. *radicalteachers have a relatively coherent set of commitments and assumptions from which they teach, and they are aware of it; this awareness distinguishes them from rocks, mollusks, and nonradical teachers.*
6. *radicalteachers possess the capacity to listen well and the self-control not to always fill silence with the sound of their own voices.*
7. *radicalteachers believe that theory and practice are not separable.*
8. *radicalteachers are concerned with process as much as product.*
9. *good intentions are not enough to create a radicalteacher.*
10. *radicalteachers do not divide neatly into four component parts: scholarship, teaching, service, and institutional need.*
11. *radicalteachers understand the power of language and do not refer to their part-time faculty colleagues as part-time persons (or people).*
12. *the teaching of radicalteachers (radical teaching, v.) is holistic; it assumes that minds do not exist separate from bodies and that the bodies or*

material conditions, in which the potential and will to learn reside, are female as well as male and in a range of colours; that thought grows out of lived experience and that people come from a variety of ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds; that people have made different life choices and teach and learn out of a corresponding number of perspectives.

13. *radicalteachers work with themselves, their classes, and their colleagues to discover, name, and change sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism.*
14. *radicalteachers demand a lot from their students; e.g., "we can refuse to accept passive, obedient learning and insist upon critical thinking" (Adrienne Rich, "Taking Women Students seriously, Radical Teacher #11, 1979).*
15. *there are varieties of radicalteachers; e.g., feminist radicalteachers are not in every respect identical with socialist radicalteachers.*
16. *radicalteachers do not assume they know it all."*

The only point I think I'd quibble with is number eight. I believe that process is much more important than product; I'll say more about that later. Other than that, this definition comes pretty close to telling you how I see my role as a teacher. For me a teacher is a facilitator or mediator, rather than a dispenser of knowledge; this is what I will mean when I use the word "teacher" during my talk.

I'm quite concerned about what I see going on in the world around me; I see so much powerlessness and hopelessness, so much injustice, so little compassion. I think a lot about what I can do to improve things. These thoughts, which haunt me at home, follow me to work. I don't change who I am when I come to work; for me, the personal is the political, and vice versa.

I work with students identified as "learning disabled" and "severely emotionally disturbed" at a Kindergarten-12th grade alternative public school. Most of my students are poor and dark-skinned. For some, English is their second language. Many have inadequate academic skills and don't do well on standardized tests. Some have no friends. Very few live with two biological parents. For all of their differences, they have one thing in common: they don't have any confidence in themselves. And this is where I see the essence of my work. I look for and use strategies which will help them to see themselves as the brilliant and capable students they truly are.

The two people who have profoundly influenced my thinking and teaching in this direction are Reuven Feuerstein, an Israeli, and Paolo Freire, a Brazilian. Each of these men is deeply concerned about the plight of the disadvantaged among his people and is passionately involved in trying to put his ideas into practice for the betterment of humanity. Both are also profoundly religious--Reuven is an Orthodox Jew, and Paolo is an advocate of Liberation Theology. Paolo's emphasis is more political, Reuven's more psychological. Thus, it has happened that people interested in vastly different populations and problems have come into contact with each man and his ideas.

Paolo's following is predominately among those who do some form of political literacy work with adults. His books and theories are also widely read by those interested in educational reform: teachers and community workers in particular, and some academics. Unfortunately, it has been the experience of many well-intentioned teachers of illiterate adults in the United States that applying Paolo's pedagogy is easier said than done.

First, there are neither pre-packaged curricula nor guidelines. Many teachers are at a loss about how to implement his approach. Second, the omnipresent and ongoing disempowerment of teachers and students, and the all too frequent lack of trust between teachers and the community, make the kind of dialogue Freire describes difficult to generate and sustain. This predicament is intensified by the isolation many teachers and students feel at all levels of the educational continuum. One way to overcome this is for teachers--and students--to get together and share their concerns as well as their successes.

Reuven's ideas are more familiar to those who work with children and teens who have been labelled as retarded: their parents, special education teachers, and some psychologists interested in alternative forms of assessment. He has a very clear picture of what he thinks should happen in the classroom, and has designed a program for teachers to use in order to assess and remediate deficient cognitive functions.

Unfortunately, one cannot have access to these materials without extensive and expensive training and ongoing supervision. He has not yet realized that teachers can develop their own materials once they know and understand his theories. It is also possible to learn about his theories from the many books and articles written by him and his colleagues, and other researchers on the *Learning Potential Assessment Device* and *Instrumental Enrichment*. It is then fairly easy to figure out how to apply his ideas in the classroom. This is what I try to do when I offer classes and workshops. Thus, I avoid the problem of the further disempowerment of teachers who must otherwise rely on someone else's material and methods, no matter how good they may be, in order to teach their students.

Because of the vast differences in their backgrounds and primary emphases--Paolo's being more theoretical and Reuven's being more practical--I may be among the few people familiar with both of their work. Along with this privilege and knowledge comes some responsibility. I want to share what I have learned from attempting to put their ideas into practice. My experience with each of them is different, though, and it is important for you to be aware of this.

I know Reuven better because I have spent much more time working with him and learning from him. Also, I am actually using his methods on a daily basis, although in my own way. Thus, I will focus more on his ideas during this talk. So, if it appears that I am talking about Paolo Freire from without, and Reuven Feuerstein from within, this is why.

Paolo Freire

Even though I have met, listened to, and worked with Paolo Freire, I am more familiar with him through his writings. I have read and re-read many of his books and collaborative efforts, and also much of what has been written about him and his philosophy. It always gives me great satisfaction to read what Freire says, primarily because he validates what I, in my perceived isolation, am trying to accomplish in the classroom.

I believe this is true for many of us who are teachers: we are all doing very meaningful and powerful things with our students, and yet, because of the society in which we live, and the system in which we work, we often feel alone, unimportant, and unsupported. This is especially true for those of us who are female. How paradoxical that we must look to white men for our support, yet be glad that men like Freire and Feuerstein exist.

Paolo Freire is a Brazilian educator who has worked mainly among illiterate adults in Central and South America. He has taught them to read by engaging them in dialogues about their world--usually by means of drawings or photographs prepared by someone who has spent some time amongst them. These scenes are both familiar and

troubling, since most of what illiterate peasants and urban slum-dwellers see around them is in need of much repair.

The use of people's themes comes out of Freire's very deep philosophical belief that one can only work with and not for or upon anyone; he calls this a *pedagogy of liberation*. Freire sees education as a means of assisting students to transform their reality rather than as an opportunity for transmitting information to them; the intention is not to describe the world but to transform it. Freire believes that every person--no matter how "ignorant" or illiterate--is capable of looking at the world from a critical perspective. Through dialogue, he believes people are able to identify the problems around them, and figure out how to better their lives. He doesn't see education as neutral, but rather as a tool which either maintains or improves the status quo.

Freire's approach to literacy focuses on *reading the world* rather than simply *reading the word*; it is designed to get people thinking and then acting on their thoughts. He believes the way to transform the system involves organizing and mobilizing. For him, education is a political struggle. This frequently causes problems; challenging the status quo is not easy. As students become agents of change, they no longer want the scenes of their daily lives to depict the poverty of the past. Their process is often seen by those in power as a threat, both politically and economically; however, Freire says that the goal is not simply to get power, but to reinvent it.

As teachers, we are in a position to effect change in our students. However, if we truly want to empower them, we must choose to be on "their" side. In order to help someone to "move", one must begin where they are. Ignoring the students' realities is possibly one of the main causes for the ongoing failure of many supposedly innovative (and expensive) curricula.

As models for our students--and other teachers--we must simultaneously live our beliefs and teach them. This is not always easy. It requires very strong faith in the ability of illiterate, disenfranchised, "ignorant" people to ultimately be responsible for transforming their world, and hence, our own. It is not always easy to remember that one cannot liberate people by talking at them, that education is only possible through dialogue.

Freire calls this perpetual awareness "critical consciousness." For him, it is the only authentic way of being in the world. "Critical consciousness" leads to "critical pedagogy" which, in turn, reinforces "critical consciousness." "Critical pedagogy" involves gaining an understanding of the structures of power in the world, the networks of political, economic and social forces that influence human life. As teachers, we must constantly be aware of these networks and where we fit in: who we are and where we are historically, who we are working with, and why we are doing what we are doing.

"Critical pedagogy" focuses on what Freire calls **praxis**: the ongoing process of reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it. Praxis is both form and content, pedagogy and curriculum; it requires profound conversions of personal, social, economic and political conduct.

Not surprisingly, Paolo's work was seen as a threat to the power structure. It resulted in his arrest, imprisonment, and exile. Fortunately, he is widely known and respected, and was offered sanctuary both in the United States and elsewhere. I am happy to say that after living abroad for many years, he is now Superintendent of Schools in Sao Paolo, Brazil, which has one of the largest school districts in the world! He is now finally able to put his theories into practice among the youth of his own country.

Reuven Feuerstein

My experience with Reuven Feuerstein is somewhat different. I met him after I moved to Jerusalem, Israel, in 1970; I worked with him for eight years. I became his research assistant and later the first teacher of his curriculum intervention program, Instrumental Enrichment. I taught both children and their teachers all over the country. When I returned to the United States in 1979, I continued to teach children and train teachers in Instrumental Enrichment. In the early 1980's I began to use--and teach teachers to use--his

Learning Potential Assessment Device (LPAD). That is what I will discuss today.

Feuerstein was the chief psychologist for Youth Aliyah, the agency responsible for the absorption of teenagers, when Israel achieved independence during the mid-to-late 1940's. Under his supervision, adolescents from Europe and North Africa were assessed to determine their suitability for farming or academic life. Much to his dismay, the overwhelming majority of these teenagers did so poorly on standardized tests that they appeared to require custodial care.

Reuven decided that, having just lost six million Jews in Europe during World War II, more losses were unacceptable. He threw out the tests and their results, and came up with a more rational way of looking at human intelligence. He devised the Learning Potential Assessment Device, which looks at how people learn (process) rather than what they know (product). He focused on identifying and remediating certain blocks to learning, which he called cognitive deficiencies.

This powerful tool is based on the theory that people learn best by being taught by someone who is both vitally interested in their success and also acutely aware of the effect this interaction will have upon learners' future encounters with the world. Its main purpose is to help maximize students' potential by designing educational programs which will help to empower them to become more independent human beings, capable of fully participating as citizens in a democratic society.

In order to predict educational success, it is more helpful to look at how one learns rather than how much one knows. The LPAD seeks to identify those strategies which enhance students' thinking and learning, and those cognitive deficits which need to be remediated. The LPAD puts students into a dynamic learning situation and focuses on improving their thinking skills while noting how resistant or acceptant they are of assistance. Overcoming barriers to learning can lead to greater self-esteem, improved motivation, and better school performance.

Feuerstein is interested in assessing learning potential. Those of us who use his LPAD ask learners to risk success. We set up the assessment situation so that it will reveal to all of us--the learner, the examiner, and sometimes the parents--the most accurate picture of these students as learners: how they function, how they respond to cues and clues, and what cognitive deficits seem to be interfering with sustained successful thinking. At this point in time, the LPAD seems to be one of the most promising tools we have for broadening the pool of students who will later come to make up the future decision-makers of our society.

According to Feuerstein, people learn in two ways: they learn by being taught, and they learn from encounters with the world around them. The former is called *Mediated Learning*, because the teacher is acting as a mediator. Both Feuerstein and Freire see caregivers (parents, teachers) as mediators, or facilitators, rather than as dispensers of knowledge. The more mediation (caring, thoughtful, empowering and transcendent interactions) children have had, the better they are able to learn from interactions with the world around them, including, and perhaps especially, those which occur in the classroom.

The transcendent aspect of a *Mediated Learning Experience* (MLE) is extremely important. Here's an example: suppose a child is hungry and wants to eat. If the caregiver prepares the food, the child learns to go to that caregiver (or another) the next time the child is hungry. If, however, the caregiver is able to transcend the moment and think of the effect this interaction will have on the child at some point in the future, then the caregiver will be more likely to tell the child where the food is kept and how to prepare it. "Please take out the vegetables and wash them," prepares someone to make a salad at a later date. "Please let me know how many eggs are left," leads to counting and then deciding whether to purchase more eggs.

Better still, finding out what the child wants, where and how it might be obtained, and how to prepare it, will lead to greater autonomy and responsibility. Of course, much depends upon the age of the child, the beliefs about the child's capabilities on the part of the caregiver, and the caregiver's level of awareness of the importance of transcending the moment.

The same is true for classroom interactions. When teachers answer students' questions, many messages are being conveyed. At the very least, the teacher is reinforcing the notion that teachers are the source of all knowledge in the classroom; further, answering their questions reinforces students' notions that they don't have the answers and/or can't find them. The message is clear: the next time you have a question or a problem, just come to the teacher for the answer. Not only is this disempowering for the students, it is very taxing on the teacher! Often, simply asking them, "what do you think?" reveals that they knew the answer all along, but didn't believe it.

Feuerstein's LPAD uses Mediated Learning to assess students' potential. The results aid teachers in designing instructional interventions which are individualized for each student and focus on the remediation of deficient cognitive functions. Once these goals are attained, students are more able to benefit from encounters with the world around them, such as regular education.

Reuven calls this process of learning how to improve one's thinking *Structural Cognitive Modifiability* (SCM) because it explains how to bring about permanent change in the way people reason. Students who are taught to compare, or hypothesize rather than to spell or multiply fractions, remember to compare and hypothesize long after these other, non-generalizable skills may be forgotten. Furthermore, these cognitive skills are applicable not only to subjects taught in school, but to other areas of life, such as interpersonal relationships, jobs and day-to-day problems.

To sum up, Feuerstein wants students to think better so that they can live more enriched, productive lives. I, too, want people to be more fulfilled, but I would prefer them to do so collectively, not as individuals. I want them to act powerfully to make this world a better place for everyone, not just for themselves.

Feuerstein and Freire: A Powerful Combination

Both Freire and Feuerstein hold similar views about learning and intelligence, as well as the role of content in the learning process. To be meaningful, everything must come from the students' own lives and cultures. These must be the starting place for all classroom discussions and projects. Both Freire and Feuerstein see the teacher as mediator, the aim of the interaction empowerment. I use a combination of Feuerstein's theories as means to achieve Freire's ends in a context which I feel is empowering of individual students for the good of the whole.

I will now tell you how I combine the ideas of these two men. I begin with Feuerstein, because that is what I use in my classroom in doing one-on-one work with individuals and small groups of children, and as I expand outward and upward, I begin to think in broader terms of how this will affect the world, which is where Freire's ideas come in. Metaphorically, I feel I am eating a Feuerstein meal at a Freire restaurant.

Although I have been profoundly influenced by these two highly successful non-European philosopher/educators, I feel that my 25+ years of experience as a teacher of "labelled" students has allowed me to learn from interactions with them and their parents and develop a pedagogy which is uniquely my own.

My Pedagogy

It is up to me to be a believer--and that I am--while at the same time trying to foster the development of that belief in my students. I tell them that I get paid to remind them that they are brilliant when they forget--and that is really the most important thing I do. Of course I must also convince those who have influence and control over their lives: their parents, teachers, other staff, et al, which is frequently much more challenging. Many teachers, administrators, psychologists and parents will often agree that all students can learn, but that all are brilliant? --no.

When teaching, I keep focused on what kind of people and citizens I want my students to be when they become adults, and I let these images be my guide. They affect the way that I teach, how I deal with questions and comments; and they influence my choices of what to teach. They also guide me, in the sense that I always try to remember that I am a model for them, and for the other students, their parents, teachers and staff, as well. Everything I do or say, or don't do or don't say, makes an impression on them. They pay very close attention to who I talk to and what I say to people both face-to-face and behind their backs. They see. They notice. They remember.

If I want these students to become agents of change, then, at the very least, I myself must be one and model this behaviour. I need to encourage them to believe that their opinions count; so I must listen to them and respect their ideas, and encourage them to share them. When they have criticisms, I suggest that they to write to the newspapers and to public officials. I must work to undo the all-too-frequent internalized notion they carry that says they are somehow inferior to others, lazy, stupid, less capable of thinking or acting in the "right way."

Briefly stated, my approach to teaching is firmly rooted in two beliefs: **first**, that each student is brilliant, and second, that each is in the process of becoming a powerful leader. I must therefore pay very close attention to what I am doing, while simultaneously thinking about the future. I always try to be aware of the effects our interaction might have on the student the next time the student is faced with a problem. I am also acutely aware of the others in the classroom who are watching us and wondering about what is going on. What effect will our interaction have on them?

For example, suppose a student has made some errors on a piece of work which is then shown to me. What can I do? Well, if I, the teacher, both find and correct the errors, what has the student learned about the possibility/ability to self-correct? And what has the student learned about me? And what have I taught the student?

If I believe that the student is brilliant, and I act on that assumption, then we need to figure out (actually I need to help the student figure out) why the mistake was made. It is very, very rare that the only reason for an error is ignorance! Often simply asking the student to look over the page will result in spontaneous corrections. If the student is unable to find the error(s), there are many options. I could ask the student to explain how the answers were obtained, I could have the student redo the page, all the while sitting close by and offering reassurance that the student is, in fact, fully capable of completing the work correctly, etc.

The point is to help empower the children, to teach them they are able to learn on their own. It also relieves me, the teacher, of one of the biggest time-wasters in our profession: grading papers. How will students ever learn to proofread and make corrections if we make the decision for them? Again, I am always thinking of what kind of adults we want in our society, and try to do my best to foster those habits and traits which will lead to that end.

This is not easy. Students, and frequently their parents, and even other teachers, and administrators, have been taught to focus on the product, rather than on the process; on the here-and -now rather than on the future; on the assignment rather than on the child. We must be firm, and explain patiently and often (to all who need to hear) why we are doing what we are doing. I have never yet heard a rational argument against this approach.

"I LIKE ME; I'M GLAD TO BE!"

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Education begins at the moment of birth. To acquire even basic literacy and the necessary life skills, an individual first must be able to say with fervour, "I like me; I'm glad to be!" Positive learning requires a foundation of personal self worth in order to succeed.

The self concept, product and producer of experience, is acknowledged to be the most important single factor affecting human behaviour. Thus, when positive learning is the desired outcome, an individual's sense of significance has always played an integral part in the results.

In today's educational world, the vast research on brain-based learning can no longer be ignored if we are to educate men and women who will be capable of leading successful lives in the 21st Century. Consequently, more than ever the role of self is vital in teaching that is compatible with the ways in which the human brain functions. Just as the brain itself has evolved to bring us forward in time, we must replace our educational paradigms to reflect a more personally meaningful foundation.

What does this mean for today's educator? At every level of schooling innovative changes have been suggested based on the extensive work of Hart (*Human Brain and Human Learning*, 1983) and the useful applications of Caine and Caine (*Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain*, 1991). While an in depth overview is beyond the scope of a 90-minute workshop, basic tenets were considered, teaching behaviours modeled, and specific educational strategies based on classroom experiences were presented.

The dialogue began with looking at questions posed by Hart for educators to examine *expectations for our students*. Answers would appear to be found by evaluating our lockstep class/grade system used with a factory model of education, that has its root in behaviorism, and which is still operated on an agricultural calendar year in most places.

Next the audience considered Hart's suggestion for creating *brain-compatible ambience in educational settings* to remove all sources of threat. Such threat is expressed in compulsory attendance, clock-run schedules, continuous testing, the use of grades, and awarding and withholding of approvals and permissions. Hart subsequently asks teachers to consider an *emphasis on all students reaching mastery* of desired learning rather than just passing. With time for achievement being made more flexible, he believes this is possible. He illustrates his point by asking, "Would you like to fly with an airline pilot who got 65 percent in landings?" (page 134).

In the fourth step Hart requires educators to look at *the reality level of our teaching*. To produce learners who can demonstrate high levels of basic competence and handle both complexity and change, he believes we must make meaningful knowledge the educational goal.

Caine and Caine state, "Brain research establishes and confirms that multiple complex and concrete experiences are essential for meaningful learning and teaching" (page 5). They suggest three interactive elements are needed: orchestrated immersion, relaxed alertness, and active processing.

Because of the brain's limitless faculty to make connections, educators are first encouraged to increase the quality and quantity of experiences offered students. Such an immersion process is needed to accommodate the brain's ability (and learning need) to grasp larger patterns from which learners can develop meaningfulness.

Then, because learning captivates the entire self, the second element of Caine and Caine's proposal is called *relaxed alertness*. This is required to accommodate the major interaction with cognitive understanding and self-perception. With the acquisition of new knowledge, a new sense of self is created. Thus, in a relaxed atmosphere based on mutual respect, and where a caring professional educator facilitates learning, students can be challenged through encouragement to stretch their minds naturally to form new patterns and connections.

The third component, *active processing*, is the vital step required for students to consolidate and internalize information. When this occurs, students truly understand information rather than just committing it to memory. Providing situations that encourage students to question, analyze, compare, contrast, and organize thoughts can greatly aid pattern detection and formation.

In this participatory workshop, strategies were constantly modeled and presented to help educators develop teaching techniques that encourage a healthy self concept and create learning situations that allow both students and teachers to feel good about themselves. For example, to introduce the workshop and motive interest, participants played with moebius strips. To model and encourage classroom-type immersion, much information on the human brain and learning was presented. Music, posters, and prepared handouts created a relaxed atmosphere and sense of organization of the basic concepts of brain-based learning.

Levels of cognitive understanding were provided to encourage the use of student-written questions and higher-order thinking. Ways to use the art of paraphrasing were suggested as tools for educators in helping their students turn words on a page into meaningful concepts. Providing learners with opportunities to choose and implement projects in personally worthwhile directions using calendar events was presented.

The importance of active processing was also included. Participants were given time to reflect and write about what they might have personally gained by their attendance and could easily implement in their classrooms. Then an exchange of ideas was used to reinforce and summarize learning.

All strategies presented adapt easily for use in subject integration and thematic teaching. Success has been achieved with students in primary, intermediate, secondary, and college level classes. The ultimate intention of these activities is to help students of all ages awake their inborn sense of wonder and "wish to learn." When this occurs, we have truly connected with the
human brain!

BEYOND THE DICHOTOMY OF FUNCTION AND VOICE IN ADULT LITERACY

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Literacy workers (among others) continually debate what we mean by adult literacy. Does literacy encompass only rudimentary reading and writing, or much more extensive knowledge? Is literacy work is one component of general education, or a distinct effort? Should literacy work centrally deal with "literature"? Without diminishing these concerns or others, I want here to deal with one specific issue, the relationship between "function" and "voice" in adult literacy. Literacy is often presented as "functional literacy" - coping with the demands of print in everyday forms, documents, regulations, and the like. Literacy is also often presented as "voice" - people's expression in writing of experience and knowledge of which they might also speak.

Function and voice are sometimes pitted against one another, tendentiously dichotomized. Functional literacy is seen as closed and top-down - reading and writing in which people serve their masters. The term "functional literacy" is seen as tainted by association with a prejudicial labelling of so-called "illiterates" who can't independently perform some arbitrary set of paperwork tasks. On the other hand, voice is seen as open and bottom-up - reading and writing in which people assert their dignity and experience, and are the authoritative source for descriptions of their own lives.

Practitioners sometimes sense that functional literacy only puts people within the grasp of dominant institutions, and that releasing student voice is a cultural force for change. There are similar theoretical conceptions. Rosen (1986, 235) writes of authoritative discourse in education, inert and magisterial. He proposes that "in the making of narrative we can most easily elude the magisterial." As teachers work to "shatter the authority of recitation with the unheard voices," we instigate "a necessarily rebellious squaring up to the oppressive power of authoritative language." Tvanic and Moss (1991, 193-4) distinguish "imposed" writing, "for which the style and range of allowable content is laid down for us by social institutions," from "self-generated" writing, "that stems from our own needs, interests and purposes, and in which we are free to adopt our own content and styles." I want to query this opposition, not theoretically but practically, by making suggestions about pedagogical strategies for literacy work that go beyond the usual split of "function" and "voice."

I assume as a point of departure that literacy work is about more than neutral technique, that it involves struggling against relations of domination and exclusion that make it difficult to develop literacy. I assume that literacy teachers work alongside students in efforts to understand language and written language, and the social relations and institutions in which they are used. From this standpoint I make some suggestions that I hope are specific and practical, and can open up further discussion. I want to show that when we start from functional uses of literacy, and examine them for the practicalities of teaching and learning, we are led on quickly both to stories, and to what we surely could call critical literacy. And likewise, following stories and voices where they lead often takes us to functional and critical matters. In either process, teachers as well as students are likely to be led to questions for which they do not already have all the answers.

Function and beyond

Functional literacy involves administrative and institutional texts, and practices of reading and writing them. These practices and texts connect people with extended forms of government and business organization. We might colloquially call functional literacy "paperwork," and analytically call it "bureaucratic inscription and regulation." From a dominant perspective, functional literacy is not reading and writing per se, but the bureaucratic literacy of "the public." It is people's ability to inscribe themselves in, and co-ordinate themselves according to, documents that are used in bureaucratic and organizational processes. In this world of text-mediated action (Smith, 1984) people's lives are reduced to documentary processes, or brought into conformity with them. "ID" cards and certificates inscribe one within government administration. Traffic signs involve one in government regulatory structures. Dosage instructions on a medicine label or instructions and warnings on household cleansers hook into corporate relations with consumers, and corporate legal liabilities (cf. Gee, 1990, 42-5). Job applications are self-inscription in the paperwork of labour market management situation, "only one person has access to the written information, but the entire oral exchange centres around that information." Dealing effectively with this situation involves knowing what's going on when the credit union official asks cryptic questions about "your purpose;"

what's happening when she looks into a folder and asks questions about salary and debts, and then writes figures on a note pad; and what it might mean when she says at the end, "is that everything?" One can hardly think about making her best case for a loan without a way of "reading" such questions, asked from an unstated context. Heath found that people often see improvements in reading skill as less important than learning "... ways of getting through ... interviews and other situations (such as visits to dentists and doctors), when someone else held the information which they needed to know in order to ask questions ...." Teaching in relation to such situations involves inquiry into the categories and procedures, if not the manuals and textbooks, of loan offices or doctors.

Another useful analysis (Holland and Redish, 1982) examined people's oral accounts of filling out a job application form. Some people, dubbed "experts," viewed the form with reference to the intentions behind it and the way it would be used - "what they're asking for" and "what will get you points." "Novices," however, did not interpret the form's questions, or assess the information they provided, with this reference to an underlying course of organizational action. "More constrained by the individual items," they left out favourable information about themselves if a form didn't explicitly ask for it. Teaching in relation to job applications involves inquiry into the production of questions and the use of information in organizational hiring.

From a learning perspective, then, knowledge about "how to ask questions" and about "what they're looking for" - that is, knowledge about institutional contexts - is part of functional competence. Not to have such knowledge is in a sense to be made illiterate, or to be silenced, in these institutional contexts. To put this another way, related explicitly to the issue of function and voice, one could say that people need stories about how documents are used. Consider, for example, finding the expiry date on a driver's license - a common item on functional literacy tests. If a student says, '?What does that mean, 'expiry date?" a likely teacher response is to make up a story. "Suppose a cop stops you after January 31. He asks for your license. You give him this one, you don't have a new one. If that happens, you'd have to pay a fine, it might be hundreds of dollars." This is not a riveting narrative. But when people have a hard time understanding how a bureaucratically or legally formulated regulation or procedure applies to them, they often use a technique that has been deemed the "scenario principle." They tell a story to make elude the magisterial. It may sometimes make sense of the merely incomprehensible.

Teacher-produced material can use this relation between ordinary narrative and the world of text-mediated action. For teachers, this relation can become a compositional technique in which stories follow their characters into organizational processes. Characters set out on courses of action in which they find themselves needing organizational knowledge and needing to read or write organizational texts. The relevance of that knowledge is intensified for student-readers as multiple stories are told, including stories told by the readers themselves. The characters, ordinary people like the students, search out organizational knowledge, and grasp the literacy that carries that knowledge. Thus the story can represent not only functional knowledge, but also the messy process of finding it necessary, deciding how to seek it out, reacting to the difficulties of the search and the gobbledygook encountered on the way, the results (good and ill) of the use of the knowledge, and so on.

This compositional device, the writing of stories that move from ordinary experience to functional knowledge, is used in one book for literacy students (Darville, 1991) which lays out some basics of consumer and labour law. In one story, the central character, George Amato was tired of unemployment. "After about three months, unemployment didn't feel like freedom any more. Hanging out in restaurants and bars didn't feel good any more. The days kept going by." Then George found a job in a catering company. He had a boss who said, "Just keep working hard. Don't give me any lip. We'll get along fine." George brought his first pay cheque stub into his literacy class, and they worked on "deductions," and "gross" and "net." Then the teacher, Paul Freer, noticed that George was getting less than minimum wage. Students in the class told many stories about lousy jobs and not getting paid. George decided not to complain, since his wages were supposed to go up anyhow in four months. But as time went by, the work got harder and harder. There were more and more 9 and 10 hour shifts, and split shifts over 14 or 15 hours. Eventually George complained about the long hours, and he was fired.

At that point, the literacy class worked together with George, figuring out how he could complain about the pay below minimum wage, the unpaid overtime, and the wages he should have received in lieu of notice of dismissal. He went to the Employment Standards

Branch offices. "He had never had good luck in offices with carpets. But he went in. He imagined having to face his class, if he didn't." The secretary handed George a form. He started to explain that he forgot his glasses and would have to fill it out at home and bring it back, and she said, 'Yell, maybe I could type in the answers on the form, if you could just tell me about your job and what you think the employer did wrong." A few weeks later, George got a cheque for over $1000, and talked over coffee with his classmates about how good it felt to finally give his boss some lip.

Such stories portray people who in practical ways "take control" of situations in which "imposed" forms of literacy are used. Such stories are devices to help people to claim rights and protection available through, for example, governments and trade unions. Even further, the pedagogical use of functional documents can go beyond helping people take control, to opening up an even more penetrating joint "critical" inquiry by students and teachers into the ways that power, often power vested in texts, is exercised in our society. I mean, by "critical" inquiry, questions about how the larger social world is structured such that an individual's concrete experiences happen as they do, questions that "problematize the everyday world" (Smith, 1987), asking how the institutional machinery that surrounds us actually works.

Consider the possibilities for a "more penetrating inquiry" in a tenant's application to have a rent increase reviewed by government authorities. Effective functional literacy, dealing with a rent review application, involves some understanding of the social relations in which the document is embedded. At the least it would involve some understanding of how documents are dealt with - in the "what they're looking for" sense--by the officials who make decisions about applications. One using the document has likely suffered through a rancorous relationship with a landlord, and there may be a long history of grievances pre-dating the rent increase. But what one might need to explain on the form is perhaps only that although the landlord is claiming "substantial improvements" as justification for a whopping rent increase, he only fixed the leaky plumbing and painted. An account of the long and rancorous relationship is likely to be treated by legal authorities "as filled with irrelevancies and inappropriate information, and litigants employing this mode of presenting their cases are frequently evaluated as imprecise, rambling, and straying from the central issues" (Conley and O'Barr, 1990). Thus learning how to use the rent review application involves learning how to provide a "rule-oriented account," one that focuses on the information relevant to the legal rules under which a case will be decided. An immediately practical functional concern can thus open the way to a study of the legal system and the nature of legal rules (cf. White, 1983). Students and teachers could further ask how the rent review rules got to be there, and thus inquire into tenant organization and the political process which takes up tenant interests. Or if landlords are getting away with raising rents all over the city, learning may lead into the workings of real estate markets, and the ways that fluctuating rates of return on capital in different areas of investment produce alternating gluts and dearths of housing.

In a similar way, Goldblatt (1990, 8) argues that relationships between literacy and health go beyond the ability to read instructions and warnings on medications, toxic products, and signs in workplace. Reading medication instructions involves understanding, for example, "why medications are prescribed and for whom," and "pricing practices for generic and brand name products." Going beyond the instructions and warnings can then lead to many issues - for example, medical training and its limitations, payment for medical services and pressures for quick treatment of symptoms, drug patent legislation and its effects on drug pricing and drug research. There can be, Goldblatt notes, "a process whereby people on the margins of power define health problems and strategize appropriate responses."

Beginning with commonplace functional literacy tasks can readily lead to matters of organizational savvy that are not explicit in them, that, indeed, are concealed in them. And it can open up the most "critical" inquiries into the workings of society's institutions. Literacy learning that deals with functional tasks does not necessarily open up these critical inquiries. But it may.

Voice and Beyond

Literacy as voice involves forms of writing that allow a powerful transformation to learning. McBeth writes (1989, 148, 152). "Learning that thought can be made visible through writing, and that writing is valued by others, creates a revolution in the mind of the newly literate adult.... [T]he greatest benefit of making adult learners the creators of their own materials is the change it brings about in the way they see themselves. They become participants in a culture in which their ideas and experiences can be shared with others through the medium of print."

So this transformation to learning is one that inverts conditions of many literacy learners' lives - that they inhabit a world filled with print, little of which represents their experiences. Developing literacy as voice is both an act of learning and "cultural action for freedom" (Freire, 1985). From a dominant viewpoint, voice is irrelevant to functional literacy. Or voice becomes relevant only when people expressing their lives reveal new domains to be administered. But it is different from a teaching and learning perspective. When people voice experience, they often relate encounters with institutions and documents; this opens up the learning process to functional and critical possibilities. Consider two examples.

Charles Melvin was born a Newfoundland fishing village. In the first four paragraphs of his autobiography, *The Long Road Home*, written while he was a participant in a labour-run workplace literacy program, he explains: "? was born at home because my Dad had no money for my Mom to go to the hospital.... When I was eight years old my father died of cancer. We had no medication to give him other than aspirin. Our family had no money for anything else. This was before government health insurance." His village school closed when he was in grade 7. Still in his teens, he "moved to a much larger community to work in a fish plant." Later, for other jobs, he moved to Labrador, and eventually to Thunder Bay. "In 1982 I got very sick and was off work for eighteen months. My doctor told me I had lupus and gave me some medication called prednisone to keep me alive, but one of the side effects of the drug was that it turned my bones to ashes." He returned to work, but over three years had to have three hip replacement operations. "It is now 1990 and the name of the company has changed to Canadian Pacific Forest Products. I am pleased to work for such a company. In our contract the union negotiated a benefit called short and long term disability. Over the years I have used it many times. It pays seventy percent of my weekly earnings. My family and I are very grateful for such a plan. It is not nice to be off sick from work. Time seems to go very slow...."

This life story is rich in itself. It would have many pedagogical uses. I want only to point out that the story lies within the social history of the winning of medical services by Canadians. Some of its key terms - "government health insurance" and "negotiated benefit - are "functional." In a literacy class, they could open up practical questions for other student readers, about how one applies for those benefits. They might also open up "critical" questions about the achievement of medical insurance. A collection of stories that encompass medical treatment, and public provision for it, or the lack of provision, would make these general questions even more likely to arise.

Here is another piece of student writing, by a woman in Saskatchewan. "After many years of struggle to make a living at menial jobs, I came back to school. I looked through the want ads and I just felt like crying ... there is nothing wrong with this type of work if you enjoy what you're doing and it's all you want. For me it was a dead end, a constant reminder that I was uneducated and, therefore, did not qualify for anything else" ("Literacy Essential ...," 1989).

To have such experience voiced is a good thing. Furthermore, the voicing itself almost unavoidably opens up other questions. What kind of literacy or what kind of education would strengthen this woman? She knows about the world she lives in, she is a competent practitioner of it. She can do jobs, read want ads, assess and resolve to change her life situation. She understands the labour market, which has "this type of work" if you're "uneducated," if you don't "qualify." Probably her writing has improved as she has studied perhaps some of her expressive strength has come as she has understood that she can use writing to objectify her own reality. Would it help her to look at various jobs in terms of how much schooling is required to enter them, and how much they pay? Would it help her to know more about labour market segmentation, how it is held in place by low minimum wages, by unemployment rates, by government measures to "fight inflation"?

I don't mean to dictate answers to these questions, only to urge that they are areas open to joint inquiry by students and teachers. Neither do I mean that all student writing should be squeezed until it yields some functional or critical juice. Much writing simply and eloquently stands on its own. "With a little imagination and the stroke of a pen, I can write about the bad day I had, the accident that I saw on the highway, the misery in the people's eyes when they saw one of their loved ones injured. But with the same pen I can escape into a place that only I can go. A place where the sand is so white, where the water is so blue, where the gentle breeze sways the palm trees and the sun softly touches my cheeks, like the tender lips of a child kissing me" (Baptista, 1991).

Beyond the Dichotomy

The possible movements, back and forth, between function and voice, perhaps seem obvious once they are developed and laid out. The distance between acquiring functional skill and critical inquiry into dominant institutions can be very short. The voicing of experience can lead willy-nilly into just such inquiry. But worksheets on documents almost never suggest these movements. And stories do not on their own impel them. One thoughtful statement urges that "[L]earner stories and perspectives... offer a wealth of information about the broader social forces that shape the lives of people who are considered illiterate. We can look at these stories for new ways of analyzing the causes and effects of illiteracy" (1991, 5). I would only add that we often need to look from as well as look at learner stories, to investigate the workings of a world that literacy learners and literacy workers alike have much to learn about. Looking from functional literacy, and from learner stories, out to the surrounding world, is an endeavour in which teachers and students can work side by side -- beyond the dichotomy of function and voice.

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NATIVE AND MULTICULTURAL LITERACY

LITERACY AND SCHOOLING: AN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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The present literacy situation reflects some major problems which have their roots in the political and socio-cultural structures. There is strong evidence that education of minority students is at risk, for the educational structure and ideology on which school is based today have not been reconsidered to take into account the new social reality. The educational system inherited an old structure that was perhaps efficient for the social needs of the past decades but in which educators today cannot seem to find the needed support. The literacy crisis affects the students at large. In this crisis, minority students face an added burden: they are expected to become literate in a language other than their mother tongue and often different from the one used during social interactions. What seems to worsen the situation for this segment of the population is the fact that their cultural background is not valued and given appropriate status at school. In this context, factors affecting literacy achievement occur in several areas; only four have been retained here because of their major importance: learning, linguistics, teaching, and school social climate.

Learning

It involves: a) the development of the child cognitive structures and the role played by the cultural and social experiences during the early years; b) the child's attitude toward learning in general and more so vis-a-vis literacy skills and oral communicative abilities; c) second language acquisition and its variables: acculturative stress, social and psychological distances, lack of self-esteem and other affective variables, linguistic and cultural disadvantages of immigrant students, attitude and motivation of newcomers towards the target language and culture prior to integration and during the adaptation phase.

Linguistics

This factor covers an area associated with five major elements: a) the linguistic code, b) the communicative competence in mother tongue and in the second language, c) prior literacy attainment in mother tongue, d) the metalinguistic awareness in both linguistic systems, and e) factors pertaining to the socio-cultural domain of language use and functions.

Teaching

It spreads over a wide variety of interrelated variables some of which have a pervasive effect on the learners: a) curriculum design, b) pedagogical strategies, c) methodology, d) learning and teaching materials, e) teacher's expectations, f) cultural biases, and g) classroom size and school location.

The size of classrooms and school location are of particular importance as they contribute to image formation by both teachers and students; a negative image can be carried on to learning.

School social climate

This fourth factor is indeed a very important one as it acts in a subtle way to affect the learning potential of students at large. Furthermore, it tampers with the students' affectivity and their sense of "self" as well as their emerging new identity. I believe that the school social climate can be a powerful factor in instilling the desire to learn and perform. The school social climate englobes a wide array of dimensions, some of which are: a) cultural diversity, b) social differences, c) discipline, d) assessment and, e) career counselling.

Of these dimensions, cultural diversity and discipline play a most significant role. Indeed, in a multicultural setting, cross-cultural communication, discourse comprehension and production, including semantic and cultural representation of knowledge and the interpretation of people's behavior in an academic environment, might be the source of hardships, misunderstandings, and confusion if not appropriately apprehended. Because of their linguistic and cultural differences a great number of ethnocultural students reaching mainstream education after their "welcoming classes" encounter tremendous difficulties (welcoming classes are classes in Quebec where young immigrants are taught French as well as subjects matters, over a period of time not exceeding eighteen months). In turn, these difficulties translate into low grades and, in some cases, failure. Series of academic failures over time tend to distort the students' self image and lower their aptitude to maintain a positive attitude towards learning. Their linguistic barrier becomes a handicap depriving them of the possibilities to fulfil their real potential. The lack of funds and adequate remedial services accentuate the feeling of loss experienced by these particular students who, after a while, give up trying, and unwillingly contribute in increasing the number of school dropouts.

The notion of discipline brings out a socio-cultural dimension about the rules and regulations, in regard to a body of expected behavioral attitudes, and the way this is interpreted by minority students. The notions of respect, proprietorship, academic achievement, penalty and punishment, as well as the teacher's role and limitation and the role of the administrative body, can be, and most often are, interpreted differently by minority students because of their cultural specificities and their perception of the behavioral norms in the dominant culture. It could be said that part of the problem resides in the fact that these behavioral norms are, most of the time, not clearly understood or in conflict with the students' original values; enforcing them without their full acceptance by the students can affect these students identity and, therefore, inhibit their learning mechanism.

As a result of mass schooling, changes in social life and the arising new opportunities, considered not possible in the forties, brought forth a democratization in the educational system allowing upward mobility regardless of the socio-economic background of individuals. This new set of opportunities has been extended to all, with the understanding that a redistribution of wealth and allocation of better paying jobs were somehow attainable to all. The shift in the social orientation which was to be carried out primarily by the public sector, did not see its full realization in the eighties.

Schooling affects social transformation and legitimizes the concept of equal opportunity for which the attainment of literacy skills is its essential goal. Naturally, it is through schooling that one develops and acquires literacy. Lately, literacy has been linked to cognitive skills by specialists. In this conceptual framework, one reduces learning of the literacy skills to a rather simplified technical process, bringing forth a feeling of social neutrality and an objective scientific texture. Can we speak of literacy failure when referring to the development of functional literacy? What seems to contribute to the prevailing confusion is that there has been a convergence of the spoken discourse and the written form, rendering the general conceptual aspect of literacy less transparent. Bourdieu (1977) has pointed out, that the problem of literacy and school performance resides in the role schools play in the distribution of the social structures in the organization of society. Karabel and Halsey (1977) have explained how social hierarchies have been transformed into academic hierarchies, legitimizing, therefore, the perpetuation of the prevailing social order. The educational process, in this case, places individuals in social and occupational hierarchies according to academic performance.

The educational process is supposed to equip students with a set of technical skills in order to ensure their functionality in society. The dilemma that minority students face is related to these technical competencies for they are linked to the normative standards to be attained in order to succeed. These normative standards are, furthermore, followed by prescriptive practices (Cook-Gumperz, 1986). It has been reported that linguistic differences within a pluralistic society is generally perceived as a sociolinguistic deficit and translated as an inability to use literate reasoning skills, explaining the great percentage of minority students in "special" schools. This misclassification renders the students liable for remedial assessment (Gupta 1988). Generally, the assessment tests lack the cultural elements and the appropriate data to adequately evaluate this category of student population. We can see that misclassification, like "normal" failure, delays or prevents the ethnocultural students from integrating successfully into the social fabric. Schools, in this context, contribute to repress the creativity, the natural talents and intelligence of minority students.

It becomes apparent that, indeed, schools have not served the interests of minority students, contributing in reinforcing the existing inequalities instead. What has escaped educators' mind is the fact that all human beings can learn what any one is capable of learning provided appropriate conditions for learning (Brookover, 1978; Feuerstein, 1980).

According to Heath (1985), there is no crisis of literacy skills, but rather a crisis of literate skills. Literate understanding, Heath underlines, requires far more than basic literacy skills, and the focus on basic skills will not lead to a more literate body of students. The failure to develop these literate skills in minority students could lead to social upheavals for schools are the instruments of power distribution. It is also where integration and assimilation take place; efforts to ensure a proper and adequate education to ethnocultural children becomes, therefore, a serious challenge to meet.

Accordingly, we can say that the present school situation does not reflect the original democratic ideals embedded in the earlier mass schooling movement. There is an urgent need to address this form of social inequity and start implementing programs capable of supporting adequate education taking into consideration the learner's cultural identity. In this period of social change, it is important to work with the dimension of minority students, and seriously consider their full integration by empowering them to become able citizens in the full sense of the term.

School failure can be explained differently depending on the ideology one subscribes to. Schools in Quebec have been denounced for failing to fulfil their mandate, i.e., transmit and develop literacy skills; teachers have been blamed for their differential teaching techniques; the efficiency of teachers training programs have been questioned as they did not include courses in cross-cultural education, and did not allow a reflection on the teacher's role as an active agent for social change. Most of the perceived problems are due in part to the fact that schools were suddenly overwhelmed by a massive arrival of immigrant students at a time when teachers were accustomed to teaching in culturally homogeneous classrooms. The structures in place were not efficient to care adequately for the needs of the new student population. Teachers had to face a number of challenges when they had no significant preparation or real support, as specialists in cross-cultural psychology were scarce, particularly so in the seventies. As teachers did not receive training in second language acquisition, they became rapidly swamped by multiple and unformulated demands which turned teaching into a complex task. Presently, the situation lived by teachers in welcoming classes of Quebec is critical. Teachers have a feeling of professional isolation because of the lack of communication with the regular sector. Furthermore, there is disparity in the linguistic notions to be taught in order to ready immigrant students for the regular sector. In the absence of a linguistic grid capable of measuring the student's linguistic competence, it is easy to understand the hardships ethnocultural students face later on in their schooling. During the ten to eighteen months of instruction they receive, students in welcoming classes are not taught strategies that foster learning because of a methodology focused on rote memory, mechanical drills, and spelling dictation.

In the regular sector, the dynamics of mainstream society are prevalent, disregarding cultural diversity. In the process of acquiring literacy skills, minority students undergo a cultural identity crisis due to fast cultural and adaptive changes they have to face. The literature acknowledges that cultural identity mediates the acquisition and development of literacy which, in turn, affects the alteration of the learner's cultural identity (Adler 1975; Ferdman 1990).

Lately, research has focused on the study of the manner in which textbooks are able to instill social values and social attitudes through portrayal of particular roles, personality traits, and type of actions. The impact of literacy on minority students' cultural identity can be either constructive or destructive, depending on the factors associated to the acculturation process, the individual's language ego and self-esteem, and the changes ordained by the hidden curriculum.

The cultural messages within the school environment and those embedded in the textbooks play an important role in contributing, positively or negatively, to the construction of the students' cultural identity. Cazden's analysis (1988), of interactional classroom structures has shown how the hidden curriculum imposes dominant culture related demands on students. Certain types of activity include some kind of social acts which are, she pointed out, culturally expected to follow others: the difficulties in learning may arise because of cultural differences. Cazden has also noticed that there was some greater cultural discontinuity and greater sociolinguistic interference between home and school. Conflict in cultural norms has led teachers to perceive students' actions as socially inappropriate and deficient, rather than to understand them as complying with different standards. According to Cazden, teachers have a differential treatment in the way they behave with low versus high achieving students in reading. Those who fail to fit easily the flow of social activity are all too often treated as though they are deficient. This pattern of differential treatment is reinforced by practices of instructional tracking. It is important to remember that ethnocultural students have to overcome more than one barrier in school. The very fact that they are labelled "visible" minority or "ethnic", gives them, at the outset, an implicit inferiority status. Furthermore, they are linguistically and culturally different and these differences are used to stigmatise them indirectly. Consequently, they are perceived as having a distinct speech, the grammar of which deviates from the accepted school standards.

According to the literature, learning is not a simple transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the student. It is mediated through complex interactive and interpretive processes; whether learning takes place is a function of the way an activity is structured. It also depends on the amount of contact and practice, the type of instruction allowed for, as well as the quality of the contact during both instruction and practice.

Ethnic differences in discourse style introduce another additional factor which makes learning more difficult because it creates interactional constraints. Cross-cultural differences in thought concern habits of thinking, not capacities for thought. Different cultures have different modes of organizing concepts. In the study of discourse, two hypotheses have been advanced to account for differences that have been observed between spoken and written discourse. The current research literature (Olson, Torrance and Tannen 1991), reports that the differences between the language used by literate people and people of an oral tradition, reside in the use or not of two specific variables: differentiation and contextualization. It has been pointed out that, literacy is not the unique cause of decontextualized thought, but a way to emphasize it. All speakers are capable of and do practice both differentiated thinking and its opposite, integrated thinking, as well as, contextualized and decontextualized thought. Their choices is culturally bound, for some thought patterns are rendered more fluent and automatic in certain cultural environments, whereas others are considered unpractical and cumbersome. Moreover, according to Cook-Gumperz (1987), and Gumperz (1987), one should not confuse dialectical diversity and multicultural representation with lack of lack of cognitive ability. The speech distinction should not be associated with orality/literacy dichotomy but should be considered as stylistic types of discourses. In that regard, children's production mirrors their cultural background and their use or not of differentiated or integrated thinking.

Cook-Gumperz, and Gumperz, have underlined that when a context is shared in a discourse there is no need to repeat the context-related information. In that case, children should not elaborate on discourse which is context bound. What appears from the research is that decontextualization is a habit of thought in industrial culture and not an effect directly produced by writing. It has been said that manners and ways to carry out cognitive processes reflect the use of either propositional thinking or mental modelling, and that those were different cognitive styles; therefore, ethnic differences in discourse style introduce yet another factor which makes learning more difficult and complex. It appears that these main cross-cultural differences in thought patterns have an implication in literacy acquisition. These differences are also reflected in the way children manipulate concepts and use language in discourse. In order to minimize some of these differences, children, it has been suggested, should learn to develop their discursive strategies in preparation for the written expository prose (Elsasser and John-Steiner 1977). Practice in the use of decontextualized thought, implementing logical reasoning, analysis and description of objects, could help learners become familiarized in the manipulation of certain cognitive operations, leading them to use another form of concept manipulation and language representation.

In the process of acquiring their literacy skills, children must learn to shift from home language to school language; they also need to develop a set of appropriate discourse strategies as well as bring modification to their multilevel linguistic inference process. It has been postulated that, in doing so, this necessary transition would not only facilitate discourse processing strategies, but would also be instrumental to literacy achievement.

It is obvious that the acquisition of literacy is a complex socio-cultural process, based on interchange and interaction. Scribner and Cole (1981), have underlined the importance of the environment and its impact on the development of the cognitive structures. In some socio-cultural settings, where oral language has primacy, children will not see the link between their environment and the written world. They are more familiar oral mode of thought where information is embedded. Also, the advantages of written language are not apparent for children issued from an oral tradition. Literacy, in such a context is neither promoted nor reinforced. The oral mode is the sole medium used for sharing experiences and learning about the world. Consequently, the child has a tendency to view the oral language as an effective and powerful way to communicate. The book is not experienced as a possible source of providing emotions or another possibility for sharing emotions and experiences. In the Western literate cultures, however, the book, very often, is perceived as an extension of the individual who might be invited to understand not only emotions in other people, but comprehend his/her own.

This cultural view on the role of print in Western societies, may imply that people in general should not display their feelings or share them with other members of their community. We might infer from this, that for an individual to be socially accepted, she/he should conform to the cultural code established by society at large, and that reading and writing fulfil the need to exchange and grow as a person. The book is then in a literate society a vital element weaved into the social behavioral fabric. Readership is a pre-requisite to membership into the social network. In such a context, a literacy-deprived life could be equated to an emotion-deprived life (Solomon 1986).

In oral tradition, it is through speech that social bonds are established. One shares knowledge emotions and experiences. Understanding the importance of print and the personal pleasures that could be derived from reading, is a challenging task in promoting the development of literacy in ethnocultural children, at a time where video and other electronic devices represent the main means of recreation and entertainment. Teachers should remember that because of all the mentioned factors minority students might be delayed or might consider literacy tasks as tiresome and which purpose is still foreign. There is a need to deploy a set of new measures to instill the desire to read if we want to make learners active participants in their literacy achievement.

Minority students must acquire both language and culture to be competent language users. Their attitude towards print and the value judgement imparted on it will have an impact on their performance. The educational system has had a double role: to emphasize that school is the best way to reach upward mobility, and take students' achievement to be the only possibility to obtain social credentials for years of studying. The pursuit of excellence, if not reinforced by specific measures and programs cannot be achieved within an ideology of a democratic education in the context of minority education. There is a lack of social concern and a climate of indifference, which is inconsistent with the concepts of equality and excellence. We need a more inclusive pedagogy; we also need to rethink our educational system so that it could be functional to all students, for education is a right. We must implement in the classrooms the desire to commitment towards learning, creativity, and respect of cognitive and cultural differences. Emphasis should be put on the development of oral skills which promote or enhance metalinguistic awareness. Classroom pedagogy should also, become instrumental in developing a literate orientation in younger children via oral means first. Literacy acquisition can be greatly facilitated by an awareness that cultural strategies are used by students in learning and manipulating concepts, and by a curriculum that reflects the plurality of the collectivity. Our libraries should reflect the plurality of today's society and educators should encourage other forms of literacy as well as literacy in other languages.

Educators should not be the only ones to rethink the educational process; society as a whole must attempt to revise its view of the present reality, taking into consideration current research in ethnography, sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology, and cross-cultural communication. Success and learning should be attainable to all as a reality and not a myth.

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METIS HISTORY AND CULTURE - A SYNOPSIS

Compiled from various sources.

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The Metis are people of mixed ancestry who emerged in Eastern Canada soon after conflict between Indians and Europeans. In the early years of this country, Metis people, depending on their skin colouring and because there was no Metis self-identity as yet were forced to identify with either the Indian or White community. This is why there was not a strong Metis presence in the East.

The offspring of the union of these two groups often married within their own group. Therefore it was not long before their population increased significantly. There were two groups of Metis descendants of the Anglo/Indian unions known as half-breeds and descendants of Franco/Indian unions known as Metis. The two were a closely knit group. They were bound by their common Indian origin, the fur trade and their western homeland. Western homeland because it was on the isolated plains of western Canada that people of mixed ancestry evolved into a new and distinct entity, a phenomenon attributable to the peculiar history of this region. Historically, Metis have often been rejected by either or both Indian and White communities. This rejection resulted in social and political systems which were often independent of both Indian and White reality and self-sufficiency.

It was not until the Metis felt the infringement upon their way of life that they formed a strong nationalist movement. It was these people, the Metis, so often referred to as "Half-breed savages", who rose to fight for their rights within the bounds of law in 1816, 1849, 1870, and again in 1885. Governments were unwilling to recognize the Metis as distinct, Aboriginal people even though they were recognized in the Manitoba Act and the Dominion Lands Act.

For more than two centuries the fur trade was the only form of commercial activity in Western Canada. Metis were employed by both the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. Some of the occupations in the companies were: voyageurs (manning the canoes, interpreters, and guides. The Metis were a key socio-economic and political force in Red River due to this.

One of the most important activities in the area was the buffalo hunt. The hunt was essential to the entire fur trade in the North West because it provided inexpensive and plentiful provisions in the form of pemmican, for the maintenance of the trading posts and boat brigades (Metis Land Rights p.12). The buffalo hunt also formed the basis of Metis social organization of great numbers of people. Therefore Metis leadership, identity and unity developed. These hunts were organized with military precision and involved the whole Metis community. Today, many of the Metis still continue trapping to supplement their income or it is their main source of income.

Metis women should also be recognized for their role in the development of the West. With her dual heritage, the Metis woman possessed the ideal qualifications for a fur trader's wife. Acclimatized to life in the West and familiar with Indian ways, she would make a successful adaptation to white culture, making moccasins, netting snow-shoes and preparing pemmican. They were often excellent interpreters and her role as intermediary between the Indians and whites became more important. They were expert needlewomen, skilled in fashioning mittens, caps and leggings which became increasingly useful. Metis women became renowned for their beautiful and intricate bead and quill work. They were skilled in providing food, i.e. snaring rabbits. An active part was played in the planting and harvesting of potatoes, the mainstay of subsistence agriculture practised around many posts (Van Kirk p.llO).

The church and its teachings touched every facet of Metis life. Religious influence can be traced in the areas of economic, social, religious and political aspects. The French Metis were ardent Roman Catholics, the English Half-breeds staunch Anglicans and the Scottish half-breeds strict Presbyterian, while in areas such as Norway House most were Methodist. From the beginning the church concentrated its efforts on the Metis and encouraged land clearing and gradually subsistence agriculture emerged as a supplement to the buffalo hunt. Guided by their missionaries, the Metis developed a personal moral conscience. Families were a close knit group who were generous, loving, co-operative and knelt together to pray.

The Metis possessed an intense sense of joi de vivre, stemming from their French Canadian ancestors. From their Aboriginal heritage they possessed the knowledge of survival in the wilderness. Proud of their strength. endurance, daring, and skills the Metis developed a strong spirit as well as a distinctive style of dress.

Political struggles did not consume all of the life of the Metis. They were and still are, fond of festivities. After the buffalo hunt, for example, a large party would be held at home, with much dancing. The Metis are well known for their dances which is a combination of their Indian, Scottish and French ancestry. The most famous, the Red River jig included all three elements (Harrison, p.27). Dances were energetic with men trying to outdo one another. During the festivities there would be contests such as: singing, best fiddler, best dancer, who could wear through his moccasins first, and whose legs would cramp first (Charette. p.43).

Many Metis also loved to play the fiddle which were often hand made from maple wood and birch. Although most Metis were not formally trained in music, they were said to tune their fiddles to the "cry of the loon and the bellow of a rutting moose" (Harrison, p.27). Many also composed their own tunes which were passed from generation to generation. Many of the fiddle players were also story-tellers. These story-tellers spent hours passing on their tales, most of which were embellished with superstitions, sightings of ghosts, and with Indian legends, among others.

The Metis also developed their own unique language called Michif. Little has be done by linguists in the study of this language and there are many opinions regarding it. Michif has been described as: a creole language, a dialect of Cree, or it is a mixture of languages. A large number of early Metis spoke several Indian languages, French and English. Michif, however, is significant as an important part of the development of language in the Metis tradition and it is unusual, if not unique among the world's languages. At the Michif Language Conference held in Winnipeg in June 1985 it was stated: "The Metis moulded the Aboriginal and settler languages into coherent patterns which reflected their own cultural and historical circumstances. Grammatical structure, accent and idiom were transformed into peculiarly Metis usages. And what was particularly Metis varied of course, from place to place and from group to group, reflecting as it did, the unique linguistic, cultural and historical antecedents of each group".

Julia D. Harrison stated in her book 'The Metis':

> *Because of their entrepreneurial, independent and adaptive spirit, the Metis of the 19th century laid a solid groundwork for the Metis of the 20th century. Some chose to leave their Indianness behind; others chose to reinforce it; still others chose to live in both worlds.*

Today, Metis Associations which make up the Metis National Council are democratic bodies with province wide "one-person, one-vote" ballot box elections of leadership. The provincial councils serve as the political voice of the Metis in each province. They promote Metis objectives and needs, develop policy for dealing with governments to achieve these objectives and participate in the design and delivery of programs and services directed toward Metis social and economic development.

Provincial Metis associations have built a variety of educational and cultural institutions such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatchewan (education and training), Pemmican Publications in Manitoba (Metis publishing house) and the Louis Riel Historical Society in Alberta (Metis museum archives and resource centre). These associations also provide a range of social services by way of Metis housing authorities both rural and urban. Metis child and family services and alcohol and drug abuse programs. Also they have established economic development corporations and financial institutions to facilitate business development.

Historians, scholars, and anthropologists alike should begin the study of the Metis both in the recent past and present day. Several sites frequented by the Metis in western Canada have been excavated and studied. The study of Metis culture may be undertaken through accounts left by explorers, missionaries, and traders, and through the analysis of such records as land titles, birth and death records and other archival materials.

Extensive studies of Metis culture must be undertaken to answer questions raised not only by the Metis but also the broader community. Many perceive that Metis culture is the Red River cart, the Red River Jig, the sash, fiddle music, story-telling to name a few. As history has recorded, the Metis from the beginning have considered themselves as a unique race, neither Indian nor white, with their own culture. Therefore the inclusion of accurate Metis history and culture in programs of any nature should be encouraged and promoted.

Our Indian cousins gave us the name *OO TI PAIN SOO UK (PEOPLE WHO OWN THEMSELVES).*

WHOLE LANGUAGE FOR NATIVE STUDENTS

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Abstract

The whole language approach to introducing language studies is one that integrates language studies with other subjects and with the child's own experiences. As such, it seems to fit very well with the literature that deals with Native children's learning styles and with teaching styles in Native schools. It is certainly consistent with Kaulback's (1984) argument, in *Styles of Learning Among Native Children: A Review of the Research*, that a more holistic approach to reading was called for.

The key component to the whole language approach is the recognition of language **experience**. The "creed" of language-experience teachers can be summarized thus:

> *Experiencing leads to thinking;*
> *Thinking leads to talking;*
> *Talking leads to writing;*
> *Writing leads to reading.*

Language experience is based on the premise that the ability to interpret written langauge is related directly to a child's ability to communicate by talking. A basic illustration of a language-experience approach in a classroom, for example, would be when a child dictates a sentence to the teacher, who then writes it on poster-sized paper in large letters. By this interaction, the teacher demonstrates that what the child says is being heard and is being repeated as writing that the youngster can read back. In this process, the teacher demonstrates the integrated nature of language based on shared experience between child and adult.

Before one can write, one must have something to say. For children, the language experience approach provides a way to express themselves in school, about activities with which the child is familiar through experience in the school and in the community. Activities such as hunting, skinning, tanning, trapping, fishing, berrypicking, making bannock, wild rice picking, stackwell housing, dog sledding, powwows, sweating, etc. are often not included in other learning resources, but in the language experience--or whole language--approach, if they are activities with which the child is familiar, they maybe the topics involved in a language learning process that is shared with others.

The whole language mandate is to create a type of environment in which all children, Native or not, can become literate. Literacy, the ability to read and write for specific purposes, is achieved in this approach through an integrated approach to all aspects of language: listening, speaking, writing and reading.

Another key concept in the whole language approach is relevancy. Traditional teaching methods are usually characterized by the use of materials written for someone else by someone else. Many children have found it difficult to relate to the language of the basal reader with its accent on simple, controlled vocabulary, its restricted sentence structure, and its shallow literary depth. Whole language materials, on the other hand, are relevant because they are chosen by the children or created by the children themselves, through language experience and then classroom publishing. The use of relevant or interest-based literature can also come in the form of library and trade books. *The Circle Program*, a series of study booklets published by Fitzhenry and Whiteside, is based on Native values and culture and is an example of print resources that might be incorporated into this approach.

The whole language teacher, as learner and collaborator, is the crucial actor in making the educational program coherent with the child's learning style. Whole language is diverse and open enough to let teachers invest their individual personalities into the realization of whole language ideals. Whole language is not particular dogma that comes with a prescriptive teacher's guide, but a general approach to language, and to finding out how it can be learned in the most natural and enjoyable way. Whole language teachers thus have to be responsive teachers who acknowledge that they too are learners, and that they can learn from the diverse backgrounds of all the other learners in the classroom.

In whole language classrooms, teachers model the behaviour they expect from their students. Thus, teachers write when their students are writing, and read when their students are reading. Children observe these acts, which speak louder than words. Whole language teachers invite children to make decisions about topic selections in writing and reading. They urge children to become independent learners and they stress self- and peer-, as opposed to teacher-evaluation. Students are expected to work cooperatively, as well as individually, in a classroom community of learners which includes the teacher.

Every child has a backpack of experiences that he or she brings to school each day. It is the mandate of whole language teachers to use this experience, and the use of language in dealing with this experience, to complement the curriculum in an subject. An important part of that backpack of experience is the child's first language, so it is axiomatic that this approach must not just "take into account" the child's first language, but must depend upon that language.

The whole language classrooms are characterized by open areas, learning centres, and tables with chairs instead of rows of desks. There are comfortable areas for whole shared reading sessions. Learning centres can include themes that deal with writing/publishing, art, authors, drama, listening, etc. There is much opportunity to learn spatially as well as verbally through picture and print, which should abound from wall to wall--even on the ceiling.

In facilitating activities in a whole language classroom, teachers use grouping dynamics in a flexible way as they work with children in a non-directive manner.

The goals of whole language are best met when there is a close home-school liaison. Whole language activities initiated at school through recognition of appropriate learning styles can be extended to the home through parent-teacher collaboration; holistic language development should not be confined by boundaries. The single most important way that parents can help children prepare for school is by reading with them.

Patience and a positive smiling outlook from a whole language teacher will be mirrored by the class. In summary, the whole language approach stresses those values which are emphasized in Native child-rearing practices. Literacy through whole language is based on the concept that language is meant to be discovered by children, much as they discover the physical world around them in their individual pursuits.

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NATIVE CONTENT IN THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM: FACILITATING CULTURAL LITERACY IN THE CLASSROOM

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Today most of us in the teaching profession are facing new challenges and opportunities associated with intercultural education, yet perhaps few of us have been adequately prepared for that task in our own pedagogical and professional formation. A personal anecdote, which I believe to be not anomalous, will illustrate my point: twelve years of university study, from 1966-1978, did not prepare me for the daily pedagogical challenge of teaching a multi-ethnic-racial and linguistic constituency. My major study, English literature, was narrowly canonical and periodized; our reading lists did not include selections from a variety of ethno-cultural, racial, gender, and sexual perspectives. Within two years of college teaching, I had begun to question-- as had many other feminist, ethnic, and minority-affiliated critics of the academic establishment--the discourses in which I had been trained and which I was expected to reproduce.

One project that this discomfort led me to undertake was the development of an english course that would focus upon Native writers, many of whom were just beginning to emerge with the power of a unique voice in the late 70s and early 8Os. Until recently, many of our society's repressed voices, on the margins of the establishment and dominant culture, have occupied places of silence and resistance. When I began my experiment in creating institutional space for the study of the Native voice in literature, it vas part of a commitment to my students who formed a multicultural mix and who increasingly needed to be sensitized to each other's ethno-cultural-racial identities as Canadians and to those "others" who called themselves First Nations people.

Although there are still too few courses being taught in Native literature, both at the college and university levels, I believe the time is propitious for change: firstly, because Native peoples have themselves taken the lead in making themselves heard and have become foregrounded on the national stage for the past few decades because of their political and social battles for equality and autonomy; secondly, because a growing body of texts are now available for instructors to use in teaching courses in aboriginal literature. These range from books produced by Native authors themselves, and sometimes published by Native-run presses, to anthologies edited or collected by non-Natives or in collaboration with a Native writer. Whereas not too long ago one had to turn to departments of Anthropology or Native Studies to learn about First Nations peoples--and then primarily in historical, ethnographic, folkloric, material cultural, or legal contexts--today it is becoming rapidly au courant to show an interest in Native writing. What has led to this change of attitude?

Undoubtedly, the ground for new socio-political awareness was prepared by feminist and minority group "storm-troopers". Their critique of male privilege and elitist hegemony were considered either "politically correct" by the Left or catastrophically destabilizing by the Right, which has produced a back-lash or what has already been labelled "post-feminist" and post-PC. Nevertheless, we cannot return to the previous status quo; we are compelled by events and by public discourse to come to grips with the reality of competing cultural and political claims upon our attention and the state's economic resources and policies. The voices of the people on the periphery of power and influence have grown more insistent that they be listened to, and many Canadians would agree with them that we not only should but that, for our collective national welfare and stability, we must.

Then, there is also the moral factor: we do not really need the quincentennial of Columbus' arrival on the shores of the continent to remind us that there has been a longstanding need for non-aboriginals to examine closely their governments' policies toward the first inhabitants of this landmass. Yet, the global publicity that this celebration has engendered has turned it into something of an anti-celebration and symbol of imperialist aggression. Whether it is the Assembly of First Nations' declaration on the matter ("Our message of 1992 is simple: 'For First Nations to celebrate the near destruction of our culture and identity would be insane.'") or the call to "a penitential celebration" by Latin American liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, or the call to Ilconsciencization" by many mainstream churches, all the signs point to an increased awareness that the relations of domination-submission must give way to new relations of equity and respect. Post-colonial studies in literature, as well, have sensitized the intellectual community to the complicity of dominant and privileged groups (educational, social, cultural, economic, and political elites) in the suppression of the voices and interests of the subordinates in the social system.

The result has been an assault on the concepts of canonicity and universals, or "master narratives. " The issues of what and whom and how to teach, and what status courses shall occupy in the curriculum, constitute a site of conflict for contending ideological parties. As Paulo Freire has remarked in his Letter to North American Teachers, "It is my basic conviction that a teacher must be fully cognizant of the political nature of his/her practise and assume responsibility for this rather than denying it" (21). He goes on to add that both a "reactionary" teacher and a "progressive" one may have the same degree of "technical competence" but "They will differ in practise, in the way they teach" (212). Today the notion of privileged texts is under scrutiny; a "hermeneutics of suspicion" prevails in regard to the handed-down cultural canons. Native writers can only benefit from this debate which creates new spaces, previously not opened up, for self-inscription in the historic process and canon formation. That this process is not without its difficulties and ambiguities is pointed out by Goldie who argues that the canon "must be under constant examination as a balance of powers" (383). The pedagogy of intercultural educational practise must set out to make conscious the subject-positions of all the voices in the multilogue and promote cultural literacy--familiarity with and understanding of many viewpoints and the material conditions out of which they arise.

When we present Native-authored texts in the classrooms of the dominant society, we are squarely facing the challenge that cultural literacy presents. Firstly, the fact of the material conditions of their reception has to be noted; if we are teaching them in predominantly non-Native settings, in institutions which regrettably still remain inaccessible to most Native people, or if we find ourselves in Native communities as teachers, we must be profoundly sensitive to the irony that our position as transmitter and analyst of the text creates. As non-Native teachers, we must be aware of the provisionality of our role vis-à-vis Native people themselves who must, with increasing self-confidence and empowerment, take on the roles that we have taken over and the functions that we have deprived them of because of paternalism. But should we therefore have a "hands off" attitude and be overly-cautious in approaching the challenge of guaranteeing the entry of Native literature into curricula? I believe not. The very goals of intercultural education--such as promotion of understanding, tolerance, changes of distorted social/gender/political/economic relations, self-esteem and respect of all peoples' rights and freedoms, international peace and reconciliation, critiques of racism, ethnocentrism, and ideologies--are based on the premise that we can communicate with each other, that the categories of "otherness" and "solitudes" can be changed to inclusiveness and communality. This is, of course, itself an ideological stance and one which, as Freire remarked, has also to be made explicit; but it is one, I think, which the self-reflective educator will not shirk.

As Jeannette Armstrong has noted, "the disempowerment of Native people" and their "empowerment through their writing" are historical phases which they have undergone (207); in a sense, this struggle is paradigmatic of all victims of oppression and violence and exclusion: through recovery of the voice, healing and transformation take place. The acquisition of literacy must proceed on many fronts and at many levels: individual, social, national, international. The concept itself must subsume not only so-called functional levels in one or more languages but also feeling and culture; there must be a literacy of emotion, of sensibility, which permits us to reach out to others who are different than we are, whose formation as human beings has differed because of culture and language, class and gender, race and ethnicity. Through the reception and study of other voices, viewpoints and traditions we may overcome the long-standing legacy of imperialism. To deconstruct the models of domination that we have all internalized is no easy task, but I believe that commitment to cultural literacy and intercultural education in the classroom is one positive and necessary step to begin this social transformation.

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NATIVE LITERACY TODAY - THE TOBIQUE APPROACH

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The main purpose of the Literacy Skills Development Program of Tobique is for the adult learners to advance their academic skills in upward self-paced progression. The long range goals are to enable the learners to further develop their education and enhance their self-confidence and employability.

This program is specifically designed for the learner who has been out of school for some time and requires help in acquiring basic reading, writing, and math skills. The initial process is to test the academic skill level of each participant. A pre-diagnostic and prescriptive approach is then applied, with supplementary materials to help the students to achieve academic levels and eventually long-range academic goals. In addition, a computerized job-functional program is also implemented to complement the overall manual tasks to be done. A lifeskills component is included in the program to help students build up their confidence and coping abilities.

One of the main objectives of the Tobique Adult Learning Centre, when handling adult learners is to approach the whole realm of teaching the adult in a holistic manner. The effects of living outside the classroom has a ma)or impact and influence on the learning ability of the individual.

The components of the presentation are: 1) The Laubach Way to Reading; 2) The Individualized Pace Learning Systems; 3) BASE - The Basic Academic Skills for Employment Program, a computerized job-functional unit; and 4) The Native-oriented Lifeskills. These areas of the presentation will be delivered with the use of visual overheads, a slide presentation and group participation.

Native Literacy Today - The Tobique Approach

We live on the Tobique Indian Reserve, which is located on the banks of the St. John River between Fredericton, New Brunswick and the Quebec-New Brunswick border. Our population is approximately 1400. We conduct a full-time weekly program called the *LiteracY Skills Development*, co-sponsored by the Canada Employment Centre.

Tobique has established one of the first Native Adult Learning Centres in New Brunswick. The Adult Learning Centre provides a number of programs available designed to improve the adult learner's ability to succeed in further educational programs, enhance employability and increase the self-confidence necessary to achieve personal goals.

1. **LiteracY Skills Development Program** is specifically designed for the learner who has been out of school for some time and requires help in basic reading, writing and math skills. The initial process is to test the academic skill level of each participant. A pre-diagnostic and prescriptive approach is then applied, with supplementary materials to help the students to achieve academic levels and eventually long-range academic goals.

In addition to the Literacy Program a computerized job functional program is also implemented to complement the overall manual tasks to be done. A Native oriented Lifeskills component is also included to help students build up their confidence and coping abilities.

2. **High School Equivalency Program,** this program is the follow-up from the Literacy program. The curriculum for this program has been designed specifically for Tobique and includes themes and topics of particular relevance to Native students. Students will study science, social studies, math, writing skills, lifeskills, and literature from a native perspective. Each student following a 15-week program will be required to write the High School Equivalency test or also known as the GED (General Educational Development) .

3. **Bridging or College Entrance Program,** following the GED program. the Bridging or College Entrance is intended to finetune the academic skills that ensure success in university and vocational programs. Students will prepare for college entrance as well as acquire first-year credits in some subjects. The academic curriculum being taught by Mount Allison University is coincided with their calendar year.

4. **General Joinery and Cabinet-making Program,** co-sponsored by Canada Employment Centre which is designed to

broaden craft skills, involve the students in the actual production of the cabinet work and hand-crafted furniture from design to assembly, and prepare individuals for further studies leading to licensed status.

Overall, one of the main objectives of the Adult Learning Centre when handling adult learners as well as the topic of Literacy, the approach when teaching the adult should be in a holistic manner.

Native Literacy and the Skills Development Program

Native Literacy is a significant and integral part of the three-phase operating principles of the Tobique Adult Learning Centre. In a community survey done by the Tobique Reserve, the following needs to be addressed were:

1. High Unemployment
2. Low Education Levels
3. Limited and Inappropriate Labour Force Skills
4. Geographically and Cultural Isolation
5. Limited Awareness of Occupational Opportunities
6. Lack of Business Knowledge
7. Inadequate Local Support
8. Lack of Information and Resources
9. Limited self-advancing opportunities
10. Lack of Role Models
11. Racial Discrimination.

The Literacy Skills Development Program addresses the following problems areas of the community:

1. Poor reading, writing, and computational skills;
2. Limited understanding of the world of work;
3. Heavy involvement in temporary seasonal unskilled employment;
4. Limited knowledge of resources outside the community;
5. Undiagnosed learning problems;
6. High drop-out rates from school; and
7. Lack of understanding and to overcome the barriers to self-sufficiency.

The main objective of this Project is to assist the residents of Tobique with low educational abilities to achieve a higher grade level, acquire life and living skills, and have some actual work experience in an occupation of their choice. The project incorporates the Native oriented Lifeskills, the computerized BASE and the PACE workplace competency models.

The program addresses the labour market needs of the Native community. The main problem areas identified were low literacy levels, learning problems, limited understanding of the working environment, limited awareness of career options and employment opportunities, and occupational skills assessment.

The project provides the participants wit upgraded literacy, increased employability potential, job seeking and maintenance skills as positive attitudes and habits required for employers. In addition to learning how to survive in the workplace, the participants learn goal-setting, problem solving, communication skills, academic and functional literacy skills.

On completion of this program, participants will have, first, upgraded their academic abilities to enable them to pursue higher educational goals, and secondly, will have been exposed to some career related work experience.

The Workshop Presentation

The Literacy Skills Development Program utilizes the following models as part of the instructional curriculum: The Laubach Way to Reading; The Individualized PACE Learning Systems; The Basic Academic Skills for Employment Program - BASE; and the Native-oriented Lifeskills component.

COMMUNITY AND HEALTH LITERACY

THE LITERACY EXCHANGE: CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations, Montreal

Harold Spanier
Nomad Scientists, Montreal

In Quebec two organizations have formed a unique partnership to promote the new learning within the framework of a national project:

Nomad Scientists was established in 1985 by people in the sciences and education field at Concordia University, Montreal. The mandate of the Nomads is to develop and implement science and environmental activities and programs in the community, with a focus on children and parents. The Nomads have been particulary effective at simultaneously involving and empowering parents, community leaders and educators to carry out these activities. Their book, *Link Science: A Hands-On Approach to the Environment* (Pembroke Publishers, 1990), provides a range of fascinating and instructive science activities.

Quebec Federation of Home and School Associations (QFHSA) is a member of the Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation (CHSPTF), the oldest and largest voluntary parent organization in Canada, which was established in 1895. The organization is dedicated to the support of education, and to the well-being of children and youth.

The national project *Literacy in the Information Age*, now at the phase six level, targeting first generation Canadians, has been funded in part by the National Literacy Secretariat, Science Culture Canada, Industry Science and Technology Canada, the Royal Society of Canada, Nabisco Brands Ltd., and other corporate entities since its implementation in May 1989.

A *Resourcebook* for the Literacy Exchange has been published with periodic updates and is available in both English and French. Some material in three heritage languages will be added in the summer of 1993.

For the purpose of the project, the term "literacy" implies the ability to function effectively in one's environment. A broad range of skills beyond basic reading and numeracy is needed today. To function effectively in a information based, technology-driven world the learner must develop the capacity for critical thinking, problem solving and decision making.

Three basic premises provide a rationale for the project:

1. Although we are living in the Information Age, most of us have yet to come to terms with the realities it is imposing upon society. The potential impact of this new technology is comparable to the revolution effected by the printing press five hundred years ago: the implications are far-reaching and profound. Already, in response the meaning of the term "literacy" itself is changing, becoming something beyond reading and writing that includes an understanding of science and technology, the engine of the modern age.

2. Changing technologies are placing severe strains upon society and its institutions. Of all who are affected, families and children are most vulnerable; the depressing increase in the incidence of child poverty in an age of technological advancement is cause for great concern.

3. Past experience has shown that those children whose access to books and learning is limited to the school stand in some danger of never becoming literate, so that when a radical departure from traditional skill-training is required, such children must become the focus of community concern.

The argument advanced by the project is that providing enrichment in literacy training, in the new sense of the term, is a responsibility that parents and those who offer or support community programmes for children need to consider. Only by creating a learning environment in the community will we be able to help children who otherwise may be at risk.

Reading, writing and critical-thinking skills must be enhanced in the general population. There are simple, easy, and interesting ways in which that objective can be achieved without destroying the intent of recreational programmes or compromising the objectives of community organizations.

At the moment young children are failing to translate their innate curiosity about physical phenomena into an accepted science view for lack of adequate training in school. Most successful students claim that parents or relatives, not teachers, provided the *early help* and *stimulation* that led them to pursue scientific studies.

By fostering the child's sense of wonder, we will as a nation become science literate, able to function effectively in a world dominated by science and technology. Social problems that seem insurmountable today, including environmental threats such as global warming and toxic waste disposal are capable of resolution only if the public can judge issues from an informed point of view.

The mechanism to give effect to the project is the Literacy Exchange. The catalyst is often a parent or school council or local home and school association that forms a network of local community groups and individuals to assess community need in light of the social and economic impact of technological change. Anticipated outcomes include a broadening of the application of existing programs or the integration of new programs into existing approaches to children resulting in increased opportunities for learning in the community.

The overall objective of the Literacy Exchange is to form a learning network in which families and community organizations are encouraged to undertake actions to promote a learning culture. By this means, community resources can be harnessed to reach the widest audience without duplication of effort.

The literacy exchanges described below involve: parents, community youth leaders, sunday school leaders, girl guides, boy scouts, service clubs, nurses and health workers, teachers and principals, radio and newspaper people, librarians, etc., etc. Examples of actions undertaken in Quebec communities are described as follows:

Gaspé region

Successful actions piloted by QFHSA, the Gaspe literacy exchange committee, and other partners include: Born to Read, a project for young families supported by CLSC centres (Quebec community and health clinics); the year round Book Exchange Cart, which provides reading resources where no public libraries exist; a reading tent at local community Festivals; Reading Circles; and magazine subscriptions donated by local adult literacy groups; book drives from the Montreal region are supplying community reading resources. The Nomad Scientists expanded the literacy project to include a focus on available science resources in the community. A large inventory of science resources is available to community volunteers, organizations and groups. Actions to include a "Science Saturday", and a long-term goal is to have a summer science camp. A steering committee continues to work on long term goals on literacy for children and youth.

Huntingdon, Quebec

This literacy exchange in the Chateaguay Valley region was well organized by a steering committee. The presentations included a panel of speakers from the local community who explained the social, economic, educational and cultural implications of illiteracy in their community. Actions include: the development of a community Resource Directory of activities and programs for children and youth; the establishment of better support for 'at risk' families and children; a series of workshops to include topics on self-esteem for families, and on poverty and social issues affecting families; the Nomad Scientists are working extensively on developing science activities for children, their families, educators, and the community; better accessibility to library services for 'at risk' children, and a Literacy Corner in the local newspaper. A steering committee continues to work on the project with long term goals on literacy for children and youth.

Chevery, Aylmer Sound, and St. Augustine, Lower North Shore region

QFHSA and the Nomad Scientists introduced literacy activities in three communities. Excellent resources were targeted on projects that the community knew they could handle. Actions undertaken: Youth Clubs, clubs for 10 to 14 year olds are looking for ways to incorporate reading and science activities into their overall programs; Special Celebrations, such as Winter Carnivals and summer festivals, will include public reading events for children; Sunday School and Senior Citizens, will be active in supporting and encouraging reading activities; Writing, a pen pal network was started when elementary children sent letters to students at Montreal area schools. Plans are underway by these communities to look at long-term literacy goals for their children and youth.

Literacy exchanges supported by the Quebec Federation of Home and School Association (QFHSA) are continuing to open up more areas of Québec. The Nomad Scientists act as a facilitator and a supporting partner in getting the community to develop or expand on science literacy activities.

Resources on the Literacy Exchange

For further information about the *Literacy Exchange* contact: QFHSA, Quebec Literacy Director, 3285 Cavendish blvd. suite 562, Montreal, Quebec, (514) 481-5619.

For more information about the Nomad Scientists, contact them care of: Lacolle Centre, 7141 Sherbrooke St. West, H4B 1R6 (514) 848-4955.

The Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation (CHSPTF), can provide valuable information on the national *Literacy Exchange program*, contact: CHSPTF, Maybelle Durkin, National Project Director, 331 Somerset St. W., Ottawa, Ontario. (613) 234-7292; FAX (613) 567-2135

ARTIFACTS AND ALPHABETS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE "READING THE MUSEUM" PROGRAM

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Canadian Museums Association, Montreal

The contents of museums are more accessible than ever due to various kinds of displays and exhibitions as well as an array of public programs. Yet all of us - children, adolescents and adults - must regularly abide by signs that say do not touch or do not go beyond this line. In many cases the restrictions are justified given the precarious condition of certain artifacts; in others the rules have more to do with imposed attitudes about how we should look and interpret. Still, if a visitor can read the signs and digest printed material, such as labels and brochures, there is a greater opportunity for understanding and appreciation, including an awareness of the norms museums abide by in choosing and presenting material.

How do people who can not read or have difficulty doing so make sense of the didactic aspects of museums? How do they *read* the museum in a literal sense? How is this kind of traditional reading bound up with other forms of literacy, such as visual and cultural, which are an integral part of a museum experience? Must we also recognize that many people who can not read do not frequent museums because they are perceived as literate institutions both in how they communicate and what they intend. Faced with these questions, the Canadian Museums Association (CMA), held a symposium in November 1990 entitled "Literacy and the Museum: Making The Connections". The major outcome is *Reading The Museum* a program to encourage literacy in and through museums. This paper describes this program by outlining its assumptions, by describing some of its activities and by providing commentary about its purpose and its plans within the context of discussions about literacy and museum education.

Literacy: For Whom and For What?

Literacy has come to mean so much more than reading and writing. There is constant reference to visual literacy and scientific literacy, to media, computer and cultural literacy to cite just a few. The CMA was not about to invent another amalgam and begin promoting museum literacy. What seemed more appropriate was to recognize that museums are sites where several literacies come into play, hence the program's purpose which is "to encourage literacy in and through museums". Underlying this aim are two related assumptions.

First, literacy is tied to museum accessibility. For individuals becoming literate museums pose challenges as the printed word is used extensively to present and explain their contents. Museums need to be sensitive to these situations while recognizing that exhibitions and collections can also invite articulation by potential readers, writers and speakers. Moreover, the literate world of museums while vast is also more available than one might expect. It is perhaps surprising to know that there are over 2500 museums in Canada, ranging from big institutions, such as the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, to small community-based museums located in towns and villages. Visits are voluntary except for programs such as obligatory school tours. Volunteers also play an integral part in public program as many museums have what are called "docents" who freely serve as educational guides. In the case of many local museums volunteers, such as a seniors group, not only act as guides; they often operate the museum except perhaps for a part-time curator or an administrative assistant. This voluntary dimension can not be overlooked as literacy education for adults is largely reliant on people who voluntarily serve as teachers and tutors. This is not to suggest that only museum volunteers should participate in literacy activities within the confines of the museum as educators and curators also must have roles and responsibilities. Rather, it is to recognize that there is an existing comfort zone for visitors which makes museums more accessible as learning institutions than their presence and holdings may imply.

Second, and in a more general but complex sense, museums as repositories and communicators of culture face untold educational challenges and responsibilities. For example, a seemingly simple label indicating the type, age and origin of an artifact can contain many inferences depending on who is visiting the museum. For museums then, education is not only bound up with reading and writing in the strict sense but with the development of many literacies, including the visual and cultural. These realities invite participation on the part of *all* visitors and this includes "taking up the museum itself as text", as symposium contributor John Willinsky suggests.

> *It is to hear both the voice that is otherwise meant to be left in the backroom, as well as the challenges and conflicts that make museum work a fascinating intellectual trade (1990, p. 194).*

Initiatives and Partnerships

The connections between literacy and museum seem compelling enough that all museums, large and small, should take serious notice of them. Many have as part of their expanding cultural and educational mandate. However, it is not the intent of the CMA and its "Reading The Museum" program to set standards or legislate strategies for implementation. As Canada's national service organizations for museums and the museum profession, the CMA intends to assist museums which have literacy interests by coordinating demonstration projects, organizing workshops and facilitating information sharing. A fundamental component of the approach is to encourage and effect partnerships between museums and other community-based organizations, such as libraries, which have mutual interests. The National Literacy Secretariat, which funded the original symposium, is also generously supporting some of these current efforts. As well, The CMA continues to seek funding from other public agencies and private sources to fund activities.

As for specific initiatives, we are hoping to launch a series of demonstration projects involving several museums. To illustrate, The Glenbow Museum in Calgary Alberta hopes to work with the "Homespun Literacy Program", a rural initiative for families who want to become literate. As part of this program, learners will create materials which pertain to their introduction to the Glenbow and its collections. The Musée de l'art de Joliette in Joliette Quebec is also proposing to work with a local literacy organization in effort to introduce the cultural and educational possibilities of the museum to a group of adult learners. One of the features of this project is to make a collective art work about experiencing the museum. The two projects differ in content and in their participatory aspects but this is an advantage as they afford a comparison of aims and approaches. While the specific constituency for the projects is literacy learners, there are also general concerns implicit in the projects which pertain to the development of a visual education. As Marie-André Briérè of the Musée Joliette points out:

> *Our society recognizes the knowledge developed from reading and writing, all too often ignoring what else is acquired through seeing and hearing as if thought simply came down to the reading and writing of words.*

> *The same things happens when one speak of literacy. One will think of reading and writing, neglecting the vast field of visual and auditory experience. The verbal goes through the textual and vice versa. We speak with words we have already recognized and we write as we speak* (1992 p. 3).

Besides these projects, the CMA program is engaged in other initiatives which seek to make connections between literacy and the museum. Of particular note is the partnership we intend to develop with *Storylinks*, an Ontario based organization which has pioneered oral history as method for encouraging reading and writing. Working with literacy educators and learners in small towns and major cities, Storylinks demonstrates the immense value of "learning through dialogue", of people recounting their own history and the history of others. The resulting tapes, written transcriptions and visual works have additional possibilities as learning resources. Storylinks projects have made use of a variety of media including video, photography, mural making, quilting, mapping, traditional crafts, masks, puppetry and theatre to present and interpret history. Both the "Reading The Museum" program and Storylinks believe museums are a natural site for oral history as their varied contents can invite expression by potential readers, writers and speakers. Working with the program, Storylinks hopes to continue its activities in Ontario and also undertake workshops and projects in other parts of Canada in cooperation with museums.

Finally, the CMA program facilitates information sharing. This includes having the coordinator of the program available as a resource person for curators, educators and their respective institutions. For example, this occurred in the case of the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, British Columbia where attempts were made to forge links with local libraries with literacy programs.

As is evident initiatives can take many directions and the CMA is encouraged by the interest so far. There is no lack of enthusiasm but our activities to date have been modest, owing mostly to financial constraints. Still, there is room for growth. Thus far, many of our efforts have focused on adults but the program in its succeeding phases must also focus on the literate dimensions of the museum as they relate to children and adolescents. In our view, several of the projects that attempt to *link* museums and their surrounding communities offer learning possibilities that are an alternative to school tours, the "one-shot" visits as many have termed them. In fact, the program may be starting to respond, in its own small way, to a call issued by Howard Gardner in his recent book *The Unschooled Mind*.

> *One challenge facing educators is how best to fuse institutions-how to inject the apprentice method into schools, into community work settings, and to find ways to bridge the geographic and psychological distances between the school and the museum. Another challenge is to prepare a cadre of educators, be they termed masters, teachers, brokers, or curators, who feel comfortable in exhibiting the links among different forms of knowing and in drawing children and families into a fuller approach to learning and understanding* (1991, p. 252).

Gardner is proposing organizational transformations but he would no doubt agree that attendant conceptual and curricular challenges also remain with respect to the kinds of teaching and learning that takes place. In the case of museum education, or should we say educating in the museum, children and families, for instance, still encounter the museum as a particular space and all that this encompasses: the works on the walls, the display cases, the increasingly prevalent study collection areas and so forth. For museums, and especially those art museums and galleries with interests in literacy, the spaces have many surfaces and layers of meaning which require "reading" in many ways. I want to conclude this paper by referring to some of these. They draw further attention to some of the conceptual concerns of the "Reading The Museum" program and in doing so suggest what can inform projects and public programs which intend to address several literate aspects of museums.

First, and returning to Willinsky's point about the museum as text, consider the spaces themselves as sources of meaning. This includes the forms of presentation used to display artifacts and works. For example, Reesa Greenberg has examined the framing of paintings and suggests that an actual frame prompts particular readings of a work. What becomes apparent, among other things, is the aesthetic attitude of the curator responsible for the work and this in turn constitutes part of a work's larger frame of reference. Next, consider the relationships between images and text. To illustrate, does a label or didactic panel only provide supplementary information and thus is peripheral to a visual reading of a work? Or does our prior regard for the printed word mediate viewing more than we are prepared to acknowledge? These are only a few of the complexities brought on by the convergence of text and image.

Curators are increasingly engaged with these matters judging by the many ways that text is now incorporated into the visual experience. For example, a recent exhibition at the Concordia University Art Gallery in Montreal featured works from the gallery's permanent collection which were of interest to Robert Ayre, an art critic who, for several decades, contributed to Montreal's daily English press. Each piece in the exhibition is accompanied by a small, unobtrusive panel which contains an extract from Ayre's review of the work. An exhibition of the work of American impressionist painter Maurice Prendergast at the Williams College Museum of Art takes a similar approach. The works are accompanied by large panels which include reviews from newspapers as well as other visual material taken from the press and other sources. The purists would no doubt decry the abundance of text in both cases and claim it detracts from a formal appreciation of the works. However, the emphasis on context suggests that there are other ways of looking which make the reading of image and text a rather multi-faceted experience.

Finally and turning to contemporary art, one of the most significant developments is the increasing incorporation of printed or written text in works. To be sure, this is not a new practice. For example, Sveltlana Alpers reminds us of the employment of words in 16th century Dutch art. Yet it is the degree and type of current usage that is so noteworthy. Some of the most compelling work is being done by Sophie Calle, including her piece in *Dislocations*, a recent group exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Calle requested that certain paintings be removed and then asked various museum staff such as curators, secretaries, and security personnel to write about what they remembered about the "missing" works. She took these recollections and transcribed them directly unto the walls where the original art works had been placed. What we experience as viewers are the interpretations of other readers as we ourselves try to recall what works were supposed to be there. Attendantly, other works in the rooms which were not removed take on different meanings because of the new readings and juxtapositions.

As Calle's installation is located in a museum of contemporary art it may seem far removed from the concerns of literacy education as must the other examples provided.
Yet Calle's work demonstrates our capacities to construct meaning. Its particular concern with reading and recollection affords all visitors, especially those who are becoming literate, an opportunity to make sense of the relationships between images and words. As Willinsky points out such acts of interpretation are tied to the premises of "whole language education" which insists that "readers must be partners in meaning making, as they bring their own experience and understanding to bear on the text" (1990, p. 190).

Of course, Calle's installation directly lends itself to the very activities of reading and writing which can not be said of all visual art. However, what all museums and their works can contribute to is a notion of literacy that goes beyond it being equated solely with the acquisition of skills. As Paul Connolly suggests, becoming literate is also about conceptual ownership, whereby people recognize they are in a position to possess and develop ideas, to partake of knowledge in its various forms. Indeed, the tenets of the whole language approach as presented by Connolly and Willinsky remain consistently pervasive and persuasive and irrespective of the texts that receive attention. For literacy then to be more than a matter of attaining competency there must be sites and resources for all learners that are readily available and rich in interpretative possibilities. Museums fulfil this requirement and as the CMA's "Reading The Museum" program suggests they provide learning experiences that are varied, informative and accessible.

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LITERACY FOR SENIORS: A NEGLECTED GROUP

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Increasingly, literacy learners are finding public forums for expressing their private voices. These voices may come to us through compilations of their poetry and prose (Burger et al., 1992), or through the interpretive filter of researchers and practitioners (Heath, 1983; Horsman, 1990; Lloyd, 1990). Listening to the everyday lived experiences of learners can help us to see their social worlds as they do. Often, however, in order to understand as fully as possible experiences of lives we have not lived, we must look beyond the individual stories, the individual voices, into the social context in which they are grounded.

"Mary" and "Fran" are two older women[2] who participate as learners in "Something Special for Seniors," a literacy program designed to meet the specific needs of older (50+) adults. In conversations with me over the last two years these two women have described many of their life experiences that directly and indirectly involve everyday reading and writing. They have talked about their limited opportunities for schooling (as children and adults); their life long desires for learning to read; how learning to read in their later years has affected their lives, and; how they have felt about all of this. Their experiences where they relate to everyday reading and writing are intricately connected to the social context in which they and their generation were raised.

Mary and Fran grew up in a generation that held firmly entrenched codes of gendered behaviour.[3] They were raised in a generation that did not believe that reading and writing were important for young girls expected only to become wives and mothers. Through the interplays of this traditional socialization and the women's accounts of their lives with limited literacy skills, a picture emerges of a complex dynamic between the roles of support versus dependency on the one hand, and how these relate to opportunities for literacy acquisition and independent living, on the other.

Background

"Something Special for Seniors" is an innovative and highly successful literacy program. Instruction by volunteer senior tutors is one-on-one and learner-centred. What is taught and how it is taught is guided by the goals, interests, learning styles and reading levels of each older student. "Something Special for Seniors" is hosted by Medicine Hat College in Alberta and sponsored by One Voice[4] with funding from the National Literacy Secretariat. This program, as a three-year pilot project, is being evaluated by the Centre for the Study of Adult Literacy at Carleton University.[5]

Literacy for Seniors

The lives of most older Canadians can be situated within the social contexts of one or both World Wars, the Great Depression, and general financial hardships. For many, these conditions resulted in disruptions to education, where and when it was available. The socio-economic climate of this time had limited the range of possible employment from which undereducated adults could choose. Many of today's older population made a living through primary and secondary industries. For livelihoods such as farming, construction and forestry, reading and writing tended not to be important. It is not surprising, then, that today's seniors comprise the largest group of undereducated Canadians. *The Survey of Adult Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities* (see Statistics Canada, 1991) reveals that 64% of seniors (aged 55-69) have some difficulty with everyday literacy tasks.

A need for a learner-centred program such as "Something Special for Seniors" arose partially in recognition of the fact that most older adults tend not to participate in already existing literacy programs. Lack of transportation, inappropriate instructional content (grammar-based, subject-oriented), and/or inappropriate classroom structure (long classes, large groups) are among the factors that tend to deter or impede seniors like Mary and Fran from participating. (See Rutherford, 1989 for a review of senior-specific learning needs.) In Alberta adult basic education is normally administered through the colleges. Many seniors are distrustful of formal institutions in general and schools in particular. "Something Special for Seniors" has allowed Mary, Fran and some twenty other older adults a real and viable alternative to existing literacy programs - programs that tend not to meet their needs as they define them.

Mary and Fran

Mary and Fran are the daughters of German immigrant farming families from South West Saskatchewan. Mary was pulled from school in grade four to help at home. Fran got as far as grade seven. While Mary worked most of her adult life as a cleaner in a hospital, Fran stopped working in a pottery factory to raise her family. Working and/or raising a family left little time or opportunity for formal learning.

> *Well, after I got married and had my children, then the time for school went out. I never thought about school, you know. Raising a family kept my mind busy all the time. [Fran]*

Each had wanted to go to school when younger, but apprehensions and inappropriate learning environments prevailed.

> *I would have went to college, and you have to be there everyday. You have to do it everyday, where I can't grasp it as fast as that.* [Fran]

> *Well, I was thinking of it quite a while ago - even when my husband was still here. I said, I would sure like to go to school. But, I don't want to go, because I says, If you go out to college or something, they would say what in the hell is she doing here - old like her coming to school. I never went on account of that.* [Mary]

In addition to their time-consuming responsibilities at home, general apprehensions of formal learning and the inappropriate available instruction, Mary and Fran did not return to school sooner for more deeply rooted reasons. They had already internalized the traditional roles prescribed to most women of their generation.

> *In those years you knew when you got married, that the wife stayed at home, raised the children, and cooked, and washed and cleaned.* [Fran]

A large part of this traditional family value system entails being dependent on the man of the house, the "breadwinner".

> *I don't know because he was always there. He was always there. You know. If there was his own banking or anything like that to do, I didn't go. I stayed home. I don't know enough of that. I never did go. We got into that routine already, and when there was stuff to do, I didn't [do any of it]. He had already done everything. So I just depended on him.* [Fran]

Fingeret (1983) tells us that non-literate adults will often develop informal social networks of literate interdependencies. As one ages, however, the persons comprising these networks often move away or pass away, leaving the less-literate person very vulnerable. For Fran and Mary, their husbands were their social network.[6]

> *Yah, my husband did all the banking, paid the bills, and if there was any letters too, he wrote them, and everything. Well, I never got a chance to do it. And not once thinking that such a thing could happen, that he'd be - that we'd be taken away from one another.* [Mary]

With the death of their husbands, Mary and Fran were left to face a world of print for which they had little or no experience.

> *But nobody thought that he'd leave before I would. Mail would come in and I wouldn't know what in the world I was reading, or what it was all about or anything. And different ones I would ask what it was all about....If someone, one of my relations, come and I asked them, 'What's this all about?' They would say, "Can't you even read your own mail?" So I never asked no more.* [Mary]

Each woman loved her husband deeply, and each depended on him. Yet, both husbands (consciously or not) worked against any movements towards perceived or real changes to the traditionally prescribed familial roles. By ensuring continuance of these dependent relations, each husband also ensured that neither Mary nor Fran could exercise her right to read her own mail. Mary and Fran could not exercise their right to access information independently and could not, therefore, make autonomous decisions involving literate activities. In the end, Mary and Fran suffered a great disservice. They could not read when their husbands lived, and could not read when their husbands died.

Mary's husband would invoke guilt. She would feel guilty if trying to improve her reading and writing meant not relying on him (a break to the traditionally prescribed roles). When Mary broached the issue of learning how to read and write better, "He'd say, 'What am I here for? I'll do it. I'll do it.' "Fran believes her husband would have "let me go back, after the kids got older". He didn't live long enough to see this through. Fran transposed her dreams for herself onto her children. "Get your education. That's all I drilled into their heads. Go to school and get your education." Mary and Fran believe that their husbands meant well. They believe that their husbands believed that maintaining the established structure of the relationships was doing what was right. Their husbands, after all, were also socialized into the traditional roles then prescribed for men. Yet, through what amounts to guises of love, support and what's best for the children,[7] Fran and Mary were not encouraged to improve their literacy skills. With their husbands deaths the women had no choice but to depend on their children for literate help.

> *Oh yah, I'd been in a bank, but I've never - When I did go into the bank, after he passed away, I always had someone with me, my daughter or someone else. So all I'd do is sign my name.* [Mary]

Fran has a loving and supportive family. Mary found herself having to manage her personal affairs at her daughter's convenience. In contrast to their relationships with their husbands, in which dependencies (whether interpreted as such or not) were normal, dependencies on their children for everyday literate events were not. Reliance on their children contradicted their expectations of what was an allowable dependency. It violated their internalized social codes of behaviour.

They joined "Something Special for Seniors" in the fall of 1990. Fran began working on math to "look after [her] own." Mary started with language experience stories and moved into high interest - low vocabulary books, and letter and card writing. She thought it would be nice to "do more things by [her]self."

By the following spring Mary and Fran were actively involved in the printed world. Mary gets lost in stories. She is writing cheques and paying her own bills. She wrote a letter to the provincial government. For the first time in her life Mary has a library card and uses it often. For the first time in her life, she wrote and mailed her own Christmas cards.

> *Last Christmas was the first time I sat down and I thought, I am going to sit down and write them up myself. I'm not going to wait for nobody to come and do it. So I made up a little list, and I asked my tutor what she thinks about it, "Oh that's great." So I wrote them all out and away they all went. So my sister-in-law phoned and said, "Mary, did you do those cards?" I said 'Yes.' "Hooray!" she says. I said, 'It's going to get better next year.' I'll send her a better one next year with more writing in it.*

Fran's math work is helping her do those things she wants to do. She can now keep score at bowling and figure out the averages.

> *Anybody comes when we go bowling and they say, "Well whose gonna keep score?" and "Who would like to keep score?" And right away I say, 'Oh, I'd love to. I'll keep score!' I love to keep score. It makes me feel good.*

She too is doing her own banking and practising wise consumerism. At The Bay, towels were on sale:

> *I got a dozen of them. I wrote out a cheque to pay for them. I said to my daughter if I did it right. I looked at the bill. They added it all up and The Bay charged $155.00. That was way over what I had. I went back to the cash. 'I'm sure there's a mistake.' And the lady said that it's on the*

> *computer. She looked on it and said, "Yes, I'm right." I said you couldn't be. Because that's what I got. Towels from $18.95 to $8.88, and $2.88 for the wash cloths. She phoned someone to make sure. She said that I was right. She took it all off. I could have just left. So I felt pretty good about that. I did something really good today. I thought about it all the way home....I sure felt good about it.... Before, I never would have checked.* [Fran]

Mary and Fran are now making more independent choices. Through learner-centred literacy and numeracy instruction, their lives have become much more self reliant, and much less characterized by the dependencies of the past.

> *You see, like, I don't have to wait until my daughter comes to do that and that. Because sometimes we'd be together at the bingo and I'd say I got this and that, and I'd hand to her - like a letter, [and ask her] what it was about, "Oh, not here." [she said].* [Mary]

It seems that the learner-centred instructional approach contributed significantly to these successes. Mary's tutor went with Mary to the library. Now Mary goes alone. Fran's tutor went with Fran to the bank. Now Fran goes alone. Fran's tutor, in particular, struggled with and redefined her concepts of success until her own notions matched the standard set by the student - being successful means achieving (or beginning to achieve) those goals that are meaningful to the learner in her daily life. This struggle toward learner-defined notions of success may be integral to effective learner-centred instruction. Fran and Mary's tutors have shown us that truly effective learner-centred instruction entails working with the student to discover how she learns best. It means working with ideas and materials that interest the student, that will help her towards her goal of literate independence.

Yet, the dynamics of any one-on-one, learner-centred instructional situation has yet to be fully explored. Fran and Mary are leading more independent lives. They have discovered the joys and freedoms of print. Nonetheless, another kind of dependency may be developing. Mary no longer waits for her daughter for help with literate activities, she waits for her tutor. Do individualized literacy programs act as literate networks supporting learners' efforts towards independence or might they inadvertently become another, perhaps safer, form of dependency?

Fingeret argues that "illiterate adults do not necessarily see themselves as dependent simply because they lack reading and writing skills" (1983; 133). Mary and Fran saw themselves as dependent on their husbands when they lived; but, the full extent of this dependency only became apparent after their husband's died. Whether or not less literate adults see themselves as dependent, having to rely on any one else for literate help is a form of dependency. It is a kind of dependency that could rob or limit an individual's access to printed materials from which autonomous choices may arise. Yet, within Fran and Mary's social worlds, this kind of dependency was expected and accepted. It fit the social construction of what they knew. Being dependent on their husbands for print-mediated transactions was simply one tangible manifestation of this larger social structure. The women were left to live alone without the literate tools they needed for full self reliance.

For Fran, Mary and other older literacy learners like them, not being able to read and write deeply affects their personal sense of self worth (Horsman, 1990; Battell, 1991). These and other lines of research (Miller, 1986; Lewis, 1990) suggest that for many women raised in the traditional family value system, support and encouragement from their families in general, and from their husbands in particular are also intricately connected to their self esteem and their ability to enter into and persevere with upgrading programs. That Mary and Fran have been socialized into roles that encourage complacency, or, from another perspective, respect for the wishes of a husband who does not reciprocate by offering his support or encouragement for literacy acquisition (something intimately tied to self worth), it becomes more clear why these older women felt unable to take action about their limited literacy skills while their husbands lived. They simply could not "betray" their husbands for a source of self esteem that might have jeopardized the stability of their relationships - that might have meant losing the sense of self worth gained from their husbands.

The examples of Mary and Fran may challenge our own views of what literacy entails, and what it can do. Their successes with "Something Special for Seniors" pose a challenge to existing literacy programs to make them more accessible and appropriate for all undereducated seniors in Canada; for these people have, through no fault of their own, been denied the choice of learning to read and write.

> *Well, when I read literacy for seniors, I thought, I'm not illiterate. I can read. I can write. I can subtract. But you need more than that. Much more than that. And when you are by yourself - [If] you have your partner, fine, it may help you. But often you don't. You have to realize that you may be alone someday.* [Fran]

> *They're good stories, I enjoyed them. You get going in reading, and then you find so many things - well what's going to happen now, what's going to happen now. It often happens that at two or three o'clock in the morning I'm still reading. I get involved in the story. I want to see what happens in the end, what happens to this one, what happens to that one. It gets your mind working.* [Mary]

End Notes

1. The Centre for the Study of Adult Literacy at Carleton University was created to serve the adult literacy practitioner and community by: offering in-service training to practitioners; developing, publishing and distributing tests and assessment materials for adult literacy; and consulting with organizations, institutions and employers on adult literacy needs and training.
2. Fran was 63 at the time of our first meeting in 1990. Mary was then 70.
3. See Meg Luxton's *More Than a Labour of Love: Three generations of women's work in the home* for one socio-historical account of the kinds of lives women had been expected to lead, and how these

lives change over time and context.

4. One-Voice - Canadian Seniors Network is a national, non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to ensuring a high quality of life for all elderly Canadians.
5. This evaluation work is being carried out under the direction of Stan Jones, director of The Centre for the Study of Adult Literacy.
6. When their husbands lived Fran and Mary normally depended on them. At times, however, such as when shopping with a daughter or trusted friend, they would feel comfortable enough to ask for help if needed. Each woman had only one friend trustworthy enough to have confided in. After their husbands' deaths, these friends did support and help them when they could. But this help could not be there on a consistency.
7. c.f. Horsman (1990).

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DEVELOPING HEALTH PROMOTING MESSAGES WITH AND FOR SENIORS WITH LITERACY AND LANGUAGE LIMITATIONS

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South Riverdale Community Health Centre, Toronto

Literacy and health are closely linked. People who read well have greater access to print information and have more opportunities to make informed decisions about their health. However, 64% of older Canadians experience some trouble reading print materials. For many non English / French speaking elders, this is further complicated by language, cultural traditions and a lack of understanding of Canada's Health Care System.

The workshop will describe how health care professionals in a community health care centre, using health promoting strategies, worked in partnerships with English and Cantonese speaking seniors to develop linguistically and culturally sensitive materials to promote safe use of medication and healthy nutrition.

Ongoing activities, such as the "In Plain English Please: Seniors Review Group", which advise government agencies and others on production of accessible and relevant health messages will also be described. The activities of this group provide an example of how community members can work in partnerships to improve communications and to increase accessibility to health promoting messages for a range of consumers with literacy and other limitations.

South Riverdale Community Health Centre, located in East Toronto, includes a population of 65,000 representing a wide range of socioeconomic, linguistic and racial backgrounds. The Centre is an alternate health care delivery model funded by the Ministry of Health and governed by a Community Board. Individual health services at South Riverdale are provided by doctors, nurse practitioners, chiropodists, case managers, a nutritionist and a social worker. Health promoters work with the community to address broader health issues. The Community Health Centre, has its emphasis on health promotion and a commitment to working with the community to provide accessible, affordable, equitable health care, "Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase their control over and to improve their health" (WHO definition 1984).

In 1988, staff was hired to work with English and Chinese speaking elderly, the second largest language group. The goal was to help seniors maintain health and independence in the community. A needs assessment identified several issue areas including medication misuse, nutrition, safety, loneliness and a need to improve co-ordination and appropriate use of support services. In learning about the community it became increasingly evident that a range of strategies was needed to address barriers which were both individual and systematic.

One of the challenges was related to communication of information. Print information, usually in pamphlet form is one of the most popular ways of communicating information about health and social services. However, the population who is most in need of information is the least likely to be able to read well.

In the general population an additional 22% of people can be reached with clear language materials. In the senior population this number is 29%. The goal our proposed programming was to improve the match between the largest number of readers in our community and the materials. It was decided the most effective strategy was to consult with and to involve community members in the process. The project was funded by The Seniors Independence Program, (SIP) Health and Welfare Canada and the objectives were:

1. To review and rate, with the assistance of seniors, existing education resources for appropriateness, relevance and acceptability.
2. To develop a slide tape presentation and pamphlets about healthy food choices and a pamphlet on safe use of medicines in English and Chinese.
3. To work with seniors of both cultures in the process of development of the aforementioned materials to ensure appropriateness, relevance and acceptability.

Rating and Review of Written and Audiovisual Resources for English Speaking Seniors

The process began with the establishment of an advisory group of seniors who worked with a readability consultant to develop a review and rating format. Over thirty seniors were involved. They reviewed a total of 300 pieces of information which included, 42 different pamphlets, 15 films and 12 videos, over a six month period of time. The process included reviews followed by one on one interviews. A SMOG readability rating of materials was also done by professionals and student volunteers. Many of the written materials were considered not satisfactory by seniors for a variety of reasons. The language used in many of the pamphlets was not clear or easy to read. Use of medical terms often made understanding even more difficult. Also, changes in vision associated with aging made reading pamphlets even more challenging. Colour, glare, and style and size of print were additional barriers to obtaining information.

One of the more significant findings was a pamphlet for seniors on how to apply for an income supplement. This pamphlet required a grade 13 reading skill level. Case managers working in our community found many isolated seniors had not applied for the income supplement they were entitled to. These seniors did not read well and/or had difficulties with vision. As a result, these seniors were not receiving the additional supplement money needed for food and other basics - basics which directly affected their health and well being.

A range of films and videos were reviewed by groups of 10 to 15 people. Any professional who "spoke down" to the audience got "thumbs down." Clear messages received the most positive comments. Films, in which older people spoke about taking control, were the most popular.

As the project neared completion, one of the SRCHC Chiropodists, who was developing a pamphlet on foot care, asked for input from group members. The core group of 15 women had become very good at suggesting how to improve health messages by using "Plain English." News about the project brought in outside requests for pre-testing.

Now the group, which continues to meet, includes pre-testing as one of its activities. To date, group members have provided input for a home support poster, a booklet on seniors' home safety checks, a book on common sense nutrition for seniors and other material for outside agencies including the official 1992 flu shot poster for the Ontario Ministry of Health.

Development of a Medication Record Card and Pamphlets to Promote Safe Medication Use

Community programming for safe medication use was being developed at the same time as the SIP project. Very few good materials were found to promote safe medication use and fewer still discussed alternatives to medication and / or complementary strategies. A medication record card was chosen as the first project.

The purpose of the safe medication card was to: 1) provide a record of medications currently being taken for routine and emergency purposes; 2) facilitate communication about medications with the person's physician and pharmacist; and 3) encourage the physician to review medications and to reduce "double dosing" by various prescribers.

The card has a bright red band suggested by our oldest member which makes it easy to locate in ones' purse. The card has travelled widely throughout Toronto, Ontario, Canada and the U.S. and two cards went off to Ireland. It is in its third printing with over 10,000 copies in circulation. The beauty of the card, developed by seniors, is its simplicity.

Three pamphlets, designed to encourage seniors to participate actively in their health care and to reduce dependence on medication, were also developed by the seniors.

Presently, the manual "*Wise Use of Medications: A Health Promotion Approach to Community Programming for Safe Medication Use With and For Seniors*", as well as the medication card and pamphlets are being translated into French.

The process of rating and reviewing educational materials has now gone beyond what was originally intended. The core group now works proactively by identifying community needs, then planning and developing materials to meet the need. A pamphlet entitled "Who Delivers Groceries in our Area" is an example of this activity. The pamphlet is a valuable community resource for those who wish to continue to live independently in their own home.

The Menu Contest

Nancy Cheng, community dietitian, identified several barriers to healthy eating in the Chinese senior population. The following were concerns:

1. The majority of the seniors which were served by the SRCHC seniors program, especially the women, had limited education.
2. As a culture, the Chinese enjoy gourmet cooking and consider eating "a heavenly joy". However, the seniors have little knowledge about food and nutrition. The concept of a balanced diet is foreign to them.
3. The food choices of the Chinese are influenced by cultural myths, misconceptions, and tradition rather than the nutritional content of foods.
4. Immigration to a new country often limits access to familiar foods.
5. Lack of Chinese health education materials, Chinese community nutritionists, language barriers and illiteracy in both languages further reduce opportunities for Chinese seniors to learn about nutrition and healthy lifestyles.
6. Finally, Chinese seniors are not familiar with the Canadian health care system which limits their ability to access information and resources.

Goals for the Project

The goals of the project, based on the identified needs, were established and a Menu Contest, which would be both educational and fun, was planned.

A Chinese New Year Health Fair publicized through talks, networking and the Chinese media launched the Menu Contest. Seniors and caregivers were asked to use guidelines provided to design menus for three days. Photographs depicting balanced meals were mounted on displays for those seniors who were unable to read. Senior volunteers were recruited to assist those seniors who wished to enter the contest but who were unable to write.

The contest was also promoted at three senior buildings, two community centres and a shopping mall to a total of 300 seniors. A total of 79 entries were submitted. Contestants ranged in age from 19 to 93, with the majority of contestants in their 70's.
Thirteen entries were chosen for a "cook-off" which was made even more exciting by the presence of the media.

The final activity of the Menu Contest was the Awards Presentation Ceremonies attended by 150 seniors and representatives from the SRCHC Board of Directors, University of Toronto, and the Ministry of Health. The guest speaker was a senior from the community who spoke on nutrition and exercises. On evaluation, the contest was considered a success because of two factors. First it addressed a need, which was to enable seniors to eat well economically, without giving up their traditional food. Secondly, it received tremendous support from agencies and volunteers.

Eating for a Healthy Heart - Slide Tape/Video Programme

Further activities were initiated which involved the active participation of seniors. A slide tape program in colloquial Chinese, funded by SIP, was developed entitled "Eating for A Health Heart". The following is a quote from a SIP publication.

> *The outstanding feature of this project is not only the success, acceptance and use of the video, but the total involvement of Chinese-Canadian seniors at every single stage of the project -from focus groups at the very beginning to choose the subject, to reviewing the script, to deciding on content and criticizing a rough cut of the video, to testing the overlaid text for visual clarity, to the dissemination of the video (with accompanying brochure) TO seniors BY senior volunteers who are known as Health Ambassadors.*

Summary of Our Learnings

Finally, some of our learning which we would like to share:

1. Working with community members requires energy, flexibility and commitment on the part of everyone.
2. Programming was supported and enhanced by our community health and social service agencies. Without their help the success and scope of the projects would have been limited.
3. The mix of core and project funding allowed the project to continue to develop and mature after the project funding was finished.
4. Information written in clear language lends itself to

translation. For example, preventive footcare information pamphlets have been translated into three languages.

5. Most importantly, the seniors involved are energized. They are making real contributions, thereby enhancing not only their health, but the health and well-being of others. They are also now involved in a more dynamic community life which continues to bring rewards to everyone involved.
6. Fun, food and fellowship were the fuel of program for both language groups. Recognition, and rewards were built in for everyone.
7. There are enormous gains to be made in advocacy for clear health promoting messages.
8. One strategy for change is through partnerships and coalition building. For example, SRCHC is a member of "Literacy for East Toronto" a group led by the Toronto Public Library which is currently bringing much needed literacy tutoring into our community. SRCHC is also represented on the Ontario Public Health Association Literacy and Health Steering Committee which will be bringing a position paper to the OPHA Annual meeting in November.
9. Finally, a word of caution, start with a simple plan. Complexities and complications will present as part of the process.

In conclusion, consumers can no longer afford to allow professionals and communication experts to develop health and related information materials without accountability. A process needs to be established whereby a range of consumers and readability experts are consulted to ensure increased accessibility to information.

The process, whereby community members became involved in the development of improved health messages in print, demonstrates the potential of the community to inform and to work with and to improve the health care system.

To order:

1. Video kit and materials
   Eating for a Healthy Heart (in Chinese)

2. Wise Use of Medication Manual and materials
3. Footcare pamphlets

Please contact :

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LITERACY FOR DEAF-BLIND ADULTS

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Literacy can be defined as the ability to read and write well enough to function in society. In a study done by the Ontario government, it was found that one in five adults lack the necessary literacy skills to function adequately in society. As a result, there has been a lot of emphasis on providing programs for adults to improve their literacy skills.

In 1987, a grant from the Ontario government, Ministry of Education, allowed Deaf-Blind Services, a department of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), to start a specialized literacy program for deaf-blind adults whose unique needs could not be met in existing community programs. The CNIB offers literacy programs in their Toronto, Hamilton, London and Ottawa offices. The Deaf-Blind Literacy Program serves adults with the dual disability of deaf-blindness. All instruction is individualized and is provided in the deaf-blind students' preferred method of communication. The instructor must be fluent in all communication methods. The program is learner centred and lessons are made applicable to the learners' lives.

The majority of learners are congenitally deaf and lost their vision as a result of Usher's Syndrome. This syndrome is characterized by congenital deafness and a later onset of night blindness and tunnel vision. The amount of vision the students have range from tunnel vision and still able to see sign language and read print to total blindness, requiring a tactual form of communication and braille.

American Sign Language (ASL) is the native language of most congenitally deaf people. It is a totally different language from English with its own grammar and syntax. It is a visual language with no written form. Thus most deaf people will graduate from high school with a reading level of grade four or less.

This lack of literacy skills is particularly devastating for a deaf person. A deaf person communicates with the hearing world by writing notes on paper. The special telephone device for the deaf and deaf-blind is a keyboard device where the message is typed in and the other person types their response. In order to enjoy television, deaf people read captions at the bottom of the screen. All of these things require good English skills. If the person has poor English, it becomes almost impossible to adequately function in the hearing world. Most deaf people with poor English skills will not be able to keep a job and are often underemployed. This is because they cannot read and write well enough to communicate with their boss. Directions are often misunderstood, thus causing the person to perform the task incorrectly.

This lack of literacy skills is much worse for a person who is both deaf and blind. This person can no longer easily communicate with a group of deaf friends in ASL and learn through their peers. The deaf-blind person cannot look at the pictures that go with a newspaper article to figure out the meaning. Deaf-blindness is the most isolating of disabilities and access to information is limited. This becomes even worse if the person does not have sufficient literacy skills.

Deaf-blind people communicate in a variety of ways:

1. American Sign Language. This must be adapted either visually by signing in a small space and at a certain distance or tactually where the learner places his hands over the instructor's and feels what is being said.
2. One hand fingerspelling in which different hand shapes form a different letter of the alphabet. Again, this can be done both visually and tactually.
3. The two hand manual alphabet in which words are spelled on the deaf-blind person's palm. The instructor must be able to adapt the speed as well as the amount of pressure on the person's palm. Some people will also use short forms which the instructor must be familiar with.
4. Large print notes.
5. Braille. There are two different levels of braille, grade one and two. Grade one is simply the 26 letters of the alphabet, numbers and punctuation. Grade two is much more complex and uses a series of contractions for various letter combinations and

words. Grade two braille requires a good understanding of English.

Many of the learners come in with a very low self esteem and a negative attitude towards "school" since teachers in the schools for the deaf frequently did not understand about the visual impairment. Although schools may be able to cope with one disability, they are usually ill equipped to handle two. Many learners experience failure at school and are thus apprehensive. Once we are able to get past this barrier, instruction can begin in earnest.

The program also has a computer that is accessed by both large print and braille. We have many educational programs as well as a regular word processing program. Many students enjoy using the computer to write stories or letters as they can get a nice type written copy and it is easy to correct any mistakes. The big advantage is they are able to see or feel what they are typing which is impossible with a normal typewriter. Most learners are more motivated to do something on the computer as it appears more "adult like" and "normal." It is very different from the reading and writing activities they associate with school. A student is much more likely to do a task on the computer as opposed to using paper and pen.

There are also a variety of technical devices which can assist learners. One of the most popular is the Closed Circuit TV Reader which magnifies the print of written text to the size needed by the student. This is very expensive device, but thanks to the Assistive Devices Program in Ontario, 75% of the cost can be paid for by the Ministry of Health. Most deaf-blind students who have enough vision to benefit from such a device have one in their homes.

English is a second language to the majority of learners, their first language being ASL. Learners tend to have difficulties with verb endings and tenses as these are indicated quite differently in ASL. English is one of the most confusing languages as there are so many exceptions to the rules. Although a learner may successfully memorize different grammar rules, this does not always help. In fact, most people learn the exceptions to the rules by relying on what "sounds" right. Unfortunately, this technique does not help a deaf-blind learner. Every rule as well as every deviation must be memorized and the student does not have the advantage of hearing to help them remember. Complex sentences are very difficult for hearing impaired students. Therefore, most materials written for a learner should avoid complex sentences and maintain the same basic structure.

Another area that causes difficulties for learners is the use of articles such as 'the' and 'a'. Articles are not used in ASL so learners will often omit them when writing English. Prepositions are also very difficult for deaf-blind students to learn.

Vocabulary can pose another major problem. Six different English words can be shown by a single sign. Words in English that have more than one meaning are also quite difficult. For example, the word "left" can mean gone, remaining or indicate direction. In ASL, each concept would be shown by a different sign. Therefore, most students tend to learn and understand one meaning of the word but have difficulty realizing that the same word can mean many different things.

I would like to provide some basic tips for instructors who might have a learner with both a hearing and visual impairment in their programs and do not have access to a special literacy program for the deaf-blind. The term "deaf-blind" does not mean a total absence of both senses. Most deaf-blind people have some residual hearing or vision, although not enough to rely on. The first thing to do is establish a communication system with the learner. It is quite easy for anyone to learn the two hand manual or fingerspelling as it is only 26 letters. The learner must have some knowledge of English or French and be able to spell for this system to be useful. If you are using the two hand manual or fingerspelling, you may have to simplify the language level when you are speaking to the person. Also, if the learner had vision before and is familiar with the print alphabet, you can always communicate by "Print on Palm." This method is very simple and anyone can use it with no special training. You simply print the capital letter on the person's palm using your finger.

If the person has partial vision, lighting can be extremely important. The room should be well lit with minimal glare. Curtains or blinds should be closed and the person's back to the window. Contrast is also very important. It is much easier to read materials that are printed on non glassy paper with a black felt tip marker. Materials should be double spaced. The size of print used will depend on the individual and whether or not they are using any magnification device when reading. The use of real objects or object pictures if the person has enough residual vision can be extremely useful. If a student has never seen or experienced a particular thing, a simple picture with minimal information is best to use.

INTRODUCING A HANDBOOK FOR INSTRUCTORS WORKING WITH LEARNERS BEING TREATED FOR MENTAL DISORDERS

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The aim of this paper is to introduce a handbook for adult educators working with students being treated for mental disorders. The handbook is written for individuals who have no previous knowledge about psychology and mental disorders. It speaks to the instructor who suspects that something she or he does not understand is interfering with a student's success. Perhaps the student is frequently drowsy, restless, or unable to remember what she or he learned for more than a few moments. During a discussion with the student, the instructor learns that the student is being treated for a mental disorder. At this point the handbook becomes useful. First alone and then together with the student, the instructor consults this handbook for information about the mental disorder, methods used to treat it, the difficulties both the mental disorder and treatments may create for the student, and strategies which other instructors and students recommend for meeting the student's needs.

While the handbook is written for educators, it is also useful for mental health workers. These individuals will know a great deal about mental disorders and treatments, but they may know very little about how these interfere with a student's efforts to learn; indeed, it is likely that they are not accustomed to thinking of the person they treat as a student. By consulting this handbook, mental health workers can discover what students and instructors have learned from their experiences about the adverse effects disorders and treatments have on learning and what therapists can do to help minimize these effects. Thus the handbook speaks to a variety of people who need a resource for working with students being treated for mental disorders. The student's special needs make it essential that instructors and mental health workers understand how mental disorders and treatments affect an adult's desire and ability to learn.

In this brief introduction to the handbook I want to describe the events which led to the decision to produce it. Then I will present a sample of the information it contains, and make some concluding remarks.

A history and overview of the handbook

The initiative of two students participating in a community-based literacy program in Toronto, Ontario played a significant role in events which led to the development of the handbook. In 1989 I was invited by this literacy program to conduct an informal workshop for tutors who were working with students being treated for mental disorders. The two students were at this workshop. They lived in the community, attended literacy classes, and were being treated for schizophrenia. They came to the workshop because they were not satisfied with the way in which the literacy program was meeting their needs. During the coffee break they approached me and suggested that a book be written for literacy workers which would explain the different disorders and treatments, describe how these hindered learning, and suggest some strategies for minimizing the problems. The need was obvious to them.

I shared their idea with participants at a second workshop on the same topic. It was well received, but it was not until I returned to Edmonton, Alberta and had the opportunity to share the idea with the staff at Highwood School, an adult education program serving psychiatric patients at the Alberta Hospital Edmonton, that the idea began to be realized. Highwood School offered to sponsor the development of the handbook and funds were obtained from the National Literacy Secretariat. The handbook has been in production for almost two years and it will be published this spring. Approximately one thousand copies will be printed and distributed to literacy programs across Canada without charge.*

It took two years to gather information for the handbook because the primary sources of information were interviews with students who were being treated for mental disorders, their instructors, literacy program coordinators, and mental health workers. I interviewed twenty-three students, who discussed the difficulties they faced in the classroom and how certain teaching strategies either improved or hindered their abilities to learn. Fifteen experienced instructors and program coordinators were interviewed to identify students' needs from the instructor's point of view; however, it was not just the students' needs which these literacy workers wanted to discuss. Learning involves a partnership between the instructor and the learner. What affects one may affect the other. Instructors and program coordinators described their special needs which come to the fore when teaching students treated for mental disorders (e.g. slipping into the therapist's role).

Three psychiatrists were interviewed, as well as social workers, psychiatric and community nurses, a pharmacist, a community advocate, and a lawyer. These people provided information about characteristics of mental disorders, side effects of treatments which are likely to create learning difficulties, community living issues, advocacy for patients, and patient's rights.

A search of published materials on the effects on learning of mental disorders and psychiatric treatment turned up many articles, but few of these approached the problem in ways that would be helpful to instructors and students. It was necessary to summarize these articles for their pedagogical value. In doing so, I was assisted by mental health workers who identified the essential information to be gleaned and presented concisely, clearly, and accurately in the handbook.

The handbook is divided into three parts. Part One contains basic information about the characteristics of seven mental disorders and treatments. The disorders are schizophrenic disorder, paranoid disorder, depressive and manic-depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, substance abuse disorders, and brain injury disorders. For the most part, the treatments discussed are medications. There are other types of mental disorder and many treatments which do not involve the use of drugs. After considering suggestions by students, instructors, and mental health workers, I decided that these seven mental disorders and medications used to treat them create the greatest difficulties for students. Part One concludes with a description of the effects of each disorder and treatment on memory.

Because those who work with students being treated for mental disorders find themselves involved with much more than just the mental disorders and drugs, Part Two provides information about the "mental health system", including an overview of different psychiatric facilities, duties of mental health professionals, various treatment methods, patient status in hospitals, and patient's rights.

Part Three identifies specific needs, first of the instructor and then of the student, and strategies for meeting these needs. The last chapter in Part Three offers suggestions for those who train instructors on how they can include in their training courses a component on working with students being treated for mental disorders.

Learning and major depressive disorder

For the sake of illustration, in this paper one of these disorders, major depressive disorder, and the methods used to treat it are described. In the handbook as in this paper, the description is guided by four questions.

What are the characteristics of major depressive disorder?

A person treated for depressive disorder will report feeling hopeless, worthless, and excessively guilty. Low self-esteem accompanied by a preoccupation with failure may generate forgetfulness and a lack of interest in work and social activities. The person may have difficulties concentrating and making decisions. It is common to experience these feeling more intensely either in the morning or evening. Energy is often low. Sleeping problems arise, including waking in the early morning hours. Physical problems emerge. Appetite and weight can increase or decrease. The person may feel restless, weak, and have thoughts of death and suicide. Indeed, suicide may be attempted.

How do these characteristics of depressive disorder hinder learning?

For the purpose of illustration, let me identify the four major difficulties which depressive disorder creates for students. The first one is lack of interest, which reduces the person's motivation to complete assignments. Test performance may suffer because the student loses her or his interest in preparing for and even completing the test.

The second difficulty is that someone being treated for depressive disorder is likely to have little desire to socialize. Social situations create stress, particularly fatiguing to those who are "down". The low self-esteem associated with depressive disorder inhibits the student's willingness to participate in social activities, including such group activities as literacy programs.

Poor memory is the third difficulty. Psychologists believe that some information is learned and retrieved with little effort, such as learning words to a song played again and again on the radio. This is called automatic memory processing. Other types of information require effort to learn. This is called effortful memory processing (Hasher and Zacks, 1979). Effortful processing is needed for learning most literacy skills. People treated for depressive disorder perform poorly on tasks which require effortful processing. Those who have written on this subject believe that because the person is easily distracted by feelings of hopelessness and guilt, she or he may be unable to focus attention on what is being studied for more than a few moments (Colby and Gotlib, 1988). Thus, the problem may not be that the person is unable to store and retrieve information from memory, but that distractions keep the information from being stored in the first place.

The fourth difficulty involves weak performance skills. These skills involve the ability to do things other than reading and writing. Drawing pictures, assembling puzzles, and performing physical tasks like sawing wood and participating in sports are examples of performance skills. Individuals being treated for depressive disorder have difficulty learning things which relate to performance skills.

What strategies are recommended for meeting the needs of students being treated for depressive disorder?

It seems that attention deficits create the greatest need. Since space is limited here, I have selected one strategy which students and instructors suggested for improving attention and thereby improving memory. The purpose of this strategy is to reduce distractions which interfere with effortful learning.

The term attention covers several types: sustained attention, the ability to avoid a waxing and waning effect; selective attention, the ability to focus on one source of information against competing stimuli; and alternative attention, the ability to shift effectively from one activity to another and back again. Each of these types of attention may improve when students learn to use the following techniques. The central concept here is to teach students to recognize and adjust to their own needs.

1. Suggest that students work in an area where traffic is minimal (e.g. a study carrel or behind a screen).
2. Discuss with the student the need to reduce distractions. Help the student to identify the types of stimuli that cause distraction. Then assist the student in organising her or his work space to reduce these stimuli.
3. Support student efforts to develop strategies for focusing attention. For example, pointing at words while reading may be frowned on by some, but for the student this physical activity may be the support she or he needs.

4. Provide short, structured activities. If the task involves more complex attention skills, reduce practice time. Teach students to divide tasks into smaller units.

Some concluding remarks

As the handbook proceeds through descriptions of the characteristics of the various mental disorders and treatments and the identification of problems and strategies to minimize the adverse effects of these problems, some crucial concerns lie hidden just below the surface. These include issues about the actual existence of mental disorder, the abuses of therapies as forms of patient management and social control, and violations of patient's rights. While many of these issues cannot be raised here, they are included in the handbook. In the space which does remain, I want to discuss one of them; that is, the concern people have over the very existence of mental disorder. Is it a disease, as many would have us believe, an indication of intolerance for differences, or perhaps a thinly disguised form of social control?

If one relies on the pamphlets published by the American Psychiatric Association, mental disorders are **mental illnesses**. For example:

> *Researchers have made tremendous progress in pinpointing the physical and psychological origins of mental illness in the past 25 years. Their studies increase accurate diagnosis and treatment for these illnesses (American Psychiatric Association*, 1988: 3-4).

Ex-psychiatric patients who organised a collective which published a magazine called *Phoenix Rising* have a very different perspective. In an issue which reports on the "11th Annual International Conference For Human Rights and Against Psychiatric Oppression" a position of the "psychiatrized" on mental disorders was put forth:

> *At least 30 people, chiefly ex-psychiatric inmates together with three or four non-inmate supporters, walked in turn up to the open mike to deliver very personal, political and often moving testimony.... They spoke*

> *the truth about what it's really like to be forcibly incarcerated, abused and brain-damaged by psychiatrists; the truth about what it's like to lose our human and civil rights under the guise of treatment; the truth*
>
> *about how both psychiatry and psychiatric institutions humiliate and invalidate us* (Weitz, 1983: 15).

Before one thinks these comments can be dismissed as extreme, it is worth noting that *The Dictionary of Psychology* offers a definition for mental disorder which suggests a certain sympathy for Weitz's views. It defines mental disorder as:

> *A more neutral term than either* ***mental disease*** *or* ***mental illness****, and preferred by many because it does not convey the assumption of the* ***medical model*** *of clinical phenomena, although it still suffers from the suggestion that the mental sphere is at once analog of the somatic and yet separate from it* (Reber, 1985: 434).

This crucial scientific/political issue is confronted in the handbook in three ways. Firstly, I explicitly avoided the use of language which implies an uncritical acceptance of the medical model, while at the same time not dismissing mental disorders as merely medical abuse. For example, the handbook refers to the characteristics of mental disorders not its symptoms. Secondly, by interviewing students and teachers as well as mental health workers I have avoided a one-sided, professional view of "the problems". Thirdly, a decision was made to refer to adults as being treated for mental disorders instead of having a mental disorder. I did this because regardless of one's point of view - that mental disorder is illness or psychiatric oppression - we can proceed from the position that individuals are being treated for these disorders. Perhaps they should or should not be.

I shall conclude this introduction to the handbook with a word about the title. The handbook will be called *Just Ask Us*, a title that conveys a message that students and instructors believe is essential for a successful educational experience; that is, there must be a willingness on the part of both learners and instructors to talk openly with each other about their respective needs. While the characteristics of some mental disorders and the side effects of many drugs used to treat them have a profound adverse effect on learning, these are not the only true barriers to learning. An unwillingness to speak openly for whatever reason creates the greatest obstacle to learning. I can think of no better way to stress the importance of open communication between student and instructor than to make this recommendation through the title of this handbook, and repeating it here seems an appropriate way to conclude this paper.

Endnote

* To receive a copy of the handbook write to the publisher: Detselig Ltd. 210-1220 Kensington Rd. NW Calgary, Alberta T2N 3P5. It will be available after April 1993.

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MEDIA LITERACY

TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA MATURITY

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Although officially Ontario is the only province to have included Media Literacy classes in the curriculum of its High school Intermediate and Senior divisions since 1989, this subject is gaining considerable momentum in terms of forming a compulsory component of our children's education. Whether we choose to call it Media Education, Edu-communication, Media Literacy or "La compétence médiatique", the fact of the matter is that we can no longer avoid integrating what the children acquire through the media into the educational curriculum.

Let us make something clear right from the start: I like television and I think that it is a great vehicle for entertainment, information and yes, at times, it is even capable of stirring my interest to the point of actually helping me to learn something. Somehow it annoys me to read and hear about how modern-day technologies, and television in particular, have eroded the family structure and are unequivocally portrayed as being both physically harmful and intellectually degenerating. Perhaps such dramatic accounts succeed in raising social concerns about the potential dangers of a pathological over-indulgence in media content. However, these same reports fail to recognize that what is believed to be a simplistic hypodermic, bullet model type of relationship between the media and their receivers has been brushed aside to the profit of a more encompassing, more contextualized rapport. To say bluntly that television unquestionably induces stereotypical patterns of behaviour or that it promotes violent conduct or that it puts pressure on certain segments of the population to dress according to certain prescribed codes is certainly effective in exalting public attention although, in the same breath, it only succeeds to paint a rather incomplete picture of the ways in which people use the media in their everyday lives.

The emergence of, or the need to have classes in Media Education has its roots in what is called "progressive pedagogy". In opposition to traditional modes of teaching, the progressive approach advocates a student-centred, enquiry and activity-based focus whereby students are seen as full participants in the learning process. In practical terms for Media Education, this philosophy translates into encouraging students to embark upon case studies and open-ended projects where the teacher acts as a senior colleague assisting when and where required. Ostensibly, this method departs significantly from conventional teacher-controlled exercises that are still very much a part of what most students experience in school in other subject areas.

Taking the media to school

Subjected to public pressure to find efficient ways to first of all keep children in school and then to improve upon their acquisition of fundamental literary skills, teachers are now expected to bring the media into the classroom and show how they really operate and how they affect the way we think, buy, behave, dream and interact with other people. Not only do teachers have the difficult task of preparing children for the challenges awaiting them once they leave school but now they must also conceive of themselves as agents of demystification vis-a-vis the media. In that capacity, there seems to be an implicit mandate given to them to alert our children to the deceptions that the media contain and ultimately to implant what is considered "objective" academic ammunition into our child's brain. In doing so, it is believed that children will be better equipped to detect and deal with the various forms of so-called devilish contents of the media and then will be able to condemn and denounce them. Although such a missionary ambition is filled with edifying motives, it rests upon a number of premises that deserve to be closely examined.

It is not at all certain that using anti-television talk with children will stimulate their interest in investigating the "grammar" of that medium. Granted that there are indeed some dysfunctional aspects of mass media industries that we would like children to be aware of, we must realise however that children are not as media-ignorant as some claim. In fact, recent development in qualitative research on children and television clearly shows children as being sophisticated, capable of discrimination and often, even critical viewers. In a survey conducted on how 6 to 9 year-old British children understand television programmes, Anne Sheppard concludes that "a preliminary exploration of children's ability to distinguish reality from fantasy on television suggests that they realise that much of what they view is fiction" (Sheppard, 1992). If we are to give any credence to the relative ability of children to sift through the media and differentiate between what is authentic and what is figurative, we find ourselves in a position where we accept the pleasures that children associate with television and must consequently surrender the view that children are threatened by television and that we must therefore save them from it.

It is not uncommon within Media Literacy circles to design exercises whose underlying aim is to get at the ideological core of a message, programme or advertisement. A typical method, suggested by Buckingham et al (1990), would include the following sets of questions:

Basic Analytical Procedures in Media Education

1. Express initial response to a given "text"
2. Identify and describe the different elements composing this "text"
3. Identify the most prevalent associations & meanings for each of these elements
4. Combine these associations/meanings together to suggest the dominant ideological meaning of the "text."
5. Compare this meaning with other instances of the same category of text in order to arrive at conclusions about their overall ideological function.

This dismembering of media contents is believed to lead children to discern the forces at work in shaping their minds to conform with a capitalistic structure that expects them to reproduce some fundamental values, aspirations and behaviours. In this scheme of things, Media Education is conceived of as a form of inoculation device against the dominant, mercantile forces controlling our society. Although seldom acknowledged, this sort of training in finding the underlying essence of a mediated text runs counter to the basic goal of Media Education, which strives to cultivate autonomous critical thinking. It is doubtful that we will ever achieve this objective by teaching youngsters what we think the true meaning of a text is. Introducing children to basic notions that will contribute to making them better informed about the way various media function must start with the recognition that any single media text can elicit more than one meaning.

This seemingly obvious observation constitutes the theoretical basis of a number of leading paradigms in communication studies today. Scholars such as Roland Barthes and Umberto Eco have long advocated the fundamental openness of any symbolic system. Recently, we have witnessed a wealth of research that demonstrates the variegated uses and interpretations associated with the reading of romance novels, foreign popular television series and domestic technologies (Ang, 1991). In most of this ethnographic research, it has been made apparent that meaning, far from being inherent to a text, derives from a complex process of negotiation between the text and the person making use of it. In this light, any attempt to work with students towards discovering what a message is truly meant to convey is pedagogically doomed. What seems to be a more fruitful approach to the study of media however, is to expose the polysemy of mediated texts, getting students to realize that whatever ideology might be in a text it may appear under different forms and shapes for different people.

Activating the learning

The disclosure of the multifarious interpretations that a message or category of messages may trigger offers the student the opportunity to realize that s/he is an active constituent in the kinds of effects that the media are said to have on the audience. We contend that by participating in group exchanges the student will gradually develop his/her analytical skills and hopefully in the process, attain a more rational perspective and sense of maturity with regard to the material that she/he consumes in the media. In this scenario however. the student is still simply "reading" the media, to use the jargon of semiology.

The activity referred to in Media Education textbooks calls for the student to "write" the media, i.e. to produce a document with his/her peers under the supervision of the teacher. We are not talking about extensive productions, but rather, of preparing documents that allow the student to connect facts, theories and notions to his/her own experience. The facts discussed in class, the learning facilitated by reading and viewing can now be put together in a group project whereby the subjective interpretation and comprehension of those involved is rendered tangible. At this stage, students are not at all asked to create alternative forms, but simply to pretend they are preparing an informational document on the genre they have chosen to study.

Our own experiment with Communication students at the University of Ottawa has shown that the essential element in this type of project has very little to do with what the students manage to produce in terms of a finished document. Because of the inexperience of the students with the various technical and organizational aspects that producing a video entails. We anticipate it to be somewhat technically imperfect. Predictably, the end result is expected to strongly emulate the documentary formats they have grown accustomed to viewing on television. Although questionable from a creative standpoint, we treat this replication of dominant styles as a moot point since the primary objective of the exercise is a concentration on the production process itself and on the adjacent reflections that it unavoidably initiates.

We can see people objecting to this type of exercise on the grounds that by not inspiring students to think in innovative forms we are in essence sanctioning their aping of the professionals and consequently feeding upon the very symbolic system that we want them to question (Moores, 1990). Far from promoting product and technology and thus falling in what Masterman calls the "technicist trap". Getting students to take part in practical media production enables them to develop their own initiatives and to examine critically both the reading and the writing processes.

But what becomes of the teacher in this enterprise? S/he becomes a facilitator, someone who guides students to appreciate that ideology, meaning and aesthetics, far from being objective notions, are strongly dependent upon how the beholder perceives them. Instead of choosing texts because they contain objectionable content that students are expected to identify, a practice which in fact constitutes a game of "guess-what-the-teacher-wants-me-to-say" (Morley, 1991), the teacher here lets the students select the type of documents they wish to explore. More importantly, Media Education teachers fully recognize, and have to conjugate with the fact, that their students possess a vast amount of latent knowledge about the subject matter, a situation seldom encountered in other disciplines. This brings about a totally different dynamic in the classroom, where the teacher's role becomes one of adding to what the students already know by offering facts about the media industries, provoking new insights and stimulating a systemic understanding of the many ramifications that the media engender in our society.

Conclusion

It is perhaps appropriate at this point to dissipate any confusion this paper might have created and state clearly that in no way should the position expressed in these pages be construed as opposing the deconstructionist approach to media studies. It is meant rather to stimulate further thoughts on the respective merits of various strategies that are all designed to foster the development of a sense of maturity with regard to how students understand the contents of the media.

The production exercise suggested here is anything but an end in itself. It is simply another means by which students can be given access to different discourses on and about the media, in order to assist them in making sense of the ways in which they experience the media in their everyday life. Doing practical work with peers offers the learners the opportunity to discover for him/herself that although media texts generally incite pleasure, they also give way to a wide spectrum of associations. It is to the very foundations of this diversity that we want to lead our students in order to help them appreciate how messages inherit the different meanings that are ascribed to them.

Those familiar with the work of American psychologist Jerome Bruner have readily identified the formative benefits of assisted self-reflection. Just recently, Bruner (1986) reiterated his faith in a learning process that centers on the expression of stance and counter-stance between the learner and the aid of his/her peers and an adult tutor. In so doing Bruner contends that the learner is given the possibility to recode in different forms what she/he already knows or what she/he has just discussed, done or been exposed to. Metaphors such as "scaffolding" and "handover" are used to exemplify the manner in which systematic interventions by teachers can assist students in developing knowledge and conceptual understanding and ultimately help them appropriate it.

Media Education as a field of study undoubtedly contains some basic elements to be conveyed to the learner. The "Media Literacy" and "La competence mediatique" resource guides that the Ontario Ministry of Education has produced for its English and French profiles are most salient examples of a collection of fundamental theoretical notions that facilitate the probing of the significance and potency of mediated texts. What we have attempted to demonstrate in this paper is the pedagogical gain that can be obtained by advocating practical work as a method of studying the ambivalent meanings that the media unavoidably instill. For anyone curious to get a better understanding of how the media industries manage to occupy such a prevalent status in our society, an enquiry-based practical approach presents itself as a concrete way to scrutinize how texts manage to acquire the subjective significance that different people give them.

What we found with the production assignment that was given to our Television class at the University of Ottawa is that not only did students respond extremely favourably to the challenge, but in the process, they found themselves endeavouring to make their knowledge explicit. "Writing" the media constitutes a much more active and demanding investment that any attempt at "reading" or decoding a text can be. The will to cultivate autonomous critical thinking among our children must include the opportunity for them to operationalize the way in which they comprehend the media. The material resources required for this type of activity are minimal and in most cases, are already present in schools. Media Education classes can thus be made to be enjoyable, while providing students with a terrain where one can be inquisitive, creative and in charge of one's own learning. At a time when terms like "activity", "interactivity" and "individual involvement" permeate the educational arena, it seems legitimate to suggest that practical exercises within a Media Education curriculum can make a significant contribution to the intellectual development of our children by giving them the opportunity to be discriminating in their judgment of media matters.

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IMAGES OF WOMEN IN MUSIC TELEVISION:
THE CASE FOR MEDIA LITERACY

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Music Television has become a transnational cultural forum. Whether privately viewed the home, or in public spaces, putting images of popular music has transformed and intensified the impact of the western pop music industry. Adopting advertising techniques of rapid cutting and juxtaposition - the music video is a compelling and often creative visual medium. And while it has brought avant-garde video production to the masses. It is also mass producing rear-garde images of women. Professor Baby of Laval University has found that 65% of music videos broadcast in Quebec are sexist. These results from November 1991, show an increase from the 96% found in 1988 from the same study.

Embodying powerful emotions and at times even progressive political values, rock music has always postured as a challenge to main stream values. Indeed it is still capable of expressing marginalized discourses. But with the ascendancy of music video (and hence television advertising) over music recording, the music business is increasingly controlled by multinational corporations with interests in organizing taste around a commitment to consumption (Grossberg, 1989). So, following the lead (backwards) of advertising, the user friendly female body becomes the preferred packaging device of videoclip.

Many defend the prevalence of women's objectification in video as fair-play. After all as the apologists for sexism say "boys will be boys", "women aren't forced to fake these rules", and the most irresponsible of evasions "you can always turn off the television if you don't like it". Of course in a society where people watch an average 25-30 hours (of television in which five hours is music TV), the television is always "on". Meaning the attitudes it endorses are always "on" in our social environment and therefore difficult to challenge.

Almost all North American young people watch music television which offers some of the most compelling fantasy-information about sexuality available to teens and young children. Unlike radio-rock culture, TV rock culture leaves little to the imagination. Jean Kilburne writes of advertising, the formal progenitor of music video, that "*mass communication is an international distributor of peer pressure that erodes private and individual values and standards*" (Kilburne, 1989). The values and standards about men and women are clear. In videos men are interesting and possess authority because they are men. We want to know what they can do. Women are visible and valuable because of their physical attractiveness and because of their urgent looks: of sexual availability, the subtext of most media versions of female beauty. The majority of women who appear an music television are background, sexual decorations. This accessory status of women in music video as in advertising, reducer them and replaceable and exchangeable objects. It is difficult to respect objects and tellingly, it is very rare to see men represented as decorative sex things. Taking their cue from advertising and American film, men can be "packaged" in a multitude of ways: tough rebel, sophisticated poet, talented musician, fun loving man's man, charming lady's man, etc. Men are judged and valued for an image of substance and character and some semblance of individuality: women first and foremost for an appearance always under scrutiny.

Music video certainly did not invent sexism. Sexist representation is; a "reliable" convention of most popular films, advertising and television programs. It is not merely that the differences between men and women are polarized and stereotyped, it is also that these representations; inevitably hierarchize. Men in our culture's representations, regardless of their appearance are individualized, masters of the situation, their lives, and by extension, women. Photography conventions found in all popular visual media reproduce these polarized rules. In music video, it is standard that men are frequently photographed from law camera angles and in medium to long shots. Both of these techniques are used to give an authoritative image to men. Women are frequently filmed from a dominating high angle shot, particularly when reclining on a bed or an the ground, which is; not a frequent position for "video" men. Zoom-ins and close ups on female body parts or inviting, pouting faces are typical to music video style, (and pornography, reproducing endlessly the stereotype of women as sexual play things. The stereotypes of female powerless contrasts with 'stereotypes of male power. Men are often stereotyped as cold, controlling even violent machos who solve things with force. Most disturbing is the stereotyped relationship that is typically featured in entertainment for young audiences; between men and women, frequently represented as a relationship of domination. No longer chained to the stove, women are more and more supposed to be chained to the bed, sometimes literally in the often violent sex imagery found in music videos. Sado-masochistic paraphernalia and threats; of violence are standard to "sexy videos."

Music television stereotypes of women as sex objects are admittedly only "original" in their volume and "normative" presence on television. For one of the lies used in the defense of our media's sex obsession is that it is the 'sign of a sexually liberated 'society. Obsessions are not freedom nor are they an honest assessment of human sexuality. And the narrow ideal of what constitutes a "sexual" woman in media (beautiful, always available, and eternally young) is hardly an image of freedom for women. Through the urgent media command for woman to meet the erotic ideal of womanhood, as Rosalind Coward writes in *Female Desire*, *"the media writes one message loud and clear across the female body. Do not act. Do not desire. Wait for men's attention"* (Coward, 1985). When that male "attention" is frequently stereotyped as selfish and menacing, is there not going to be a conflict fur young women who have a right to confidence in the development of their sexuality?

The mass-produced, exclusive value assigned to official versions of female beauty has been discussed in many feminist works, the most recent of which is *The Beauty Myth* by Naomi Wolf. *"Our culture gives a young woman only two dreams in which to imagine her body like a coin with two faces, one pornographic, the other anorexic, the first for night-time the second for day"* (Wolf, 1990). Eating disorders are now getting media attention. With one in five women suffering from variations of bulimia or anorexia the link to the images of very thin women valorized in media are undeniable. Finally we are willing to admit that the images; in media influence women to do violence to themselves. What about the violence done to women by men? In North America one in four women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime and one in eight women are battered by their partners. In America 50% of women needing emergency treatment are women injured by violent partners. Can a link be made from an increasingly violent media images of men and sexuality to male violence against women? According to historian Susan G. Cole, *"In spite of hopes to the contrary, pornography and mass culture are working to the contrary sexuality with rape, reinforcing the patterns of male dominance and female submission so* *that many young people believe this is simply the way sex is"* (Cole, 1989).

Music television reproduces stereotypes of men and women relationships of domination and subordination. Even more alarming are the twin tendencies to both erotically violence and to render violent all erotic encounters. Because media is as widespread and influential, the negative attitudes and stereotypes reinforced and promulgated there have to be challenged. An alerted consumer is one of the best counter-offensives; to media bombardment. It is for this reason that media literacy skills, the reading and decoding of media images, are essential for all age groups, but particularly children and adolescents. Canadian children will have spent 30% more time in front of the television than in the classroom by the time they are eighteen. Inclusion of media courses at schools as well as government attention to the problem of violent, sexist imagery on television are imperative if any public education strategy is to be successful. Such critical awareness among the consumers of media will be a powerful tool in ensuring social responsibility from media producers.

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READING MEDIA SCIENCE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE LITERACY

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What is "science literacy"? Is it something that one can demonstrate by attaining a certain level of performative ability? Is it, rather, something like E.D. Hirsch's "cultural literacy," in which awareness of terms or concepts takes precedence over one's ability to apply them? Or is it something specific, modified by science's characteristics and our limitations and needs? This paper explores the nature of a specific type of science literacy in attempting to formulate a critical approach to science as it is represented in the mass media. While the mass media is profit-driven and performs a largely normative social function, its representations of science can be productive, providing readers (and I use this term to designate any consumer of mass media) with the opportunity to develop certain critical literacy skills, and also presenting a forum in which readers can deploy these skills.

Usually, when speaking of "literacy," we are referring to the ability to function in a particular area (reading/writing initially, but "literacy" has now stopped meaning *literally* that, and the term has moved into the realm of the metaphor). If someone can read at a predetermined level, he or she is said to be literate. Literacy, then, is in this formulation tied to a person's ability to perform a task.

E.D. Hirsch's concept of literacy represents an alternate use of the term. In *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Should Know*, Hirsch argues that there are certain key references, allusions, or ideas with which a "culturally literate" member of a society should be familiar; here, "literacy" denotes one's ability to recognize or identify accurately these "key words" or ideas. A culturally literate person should know that *The Sun Also Rises* is a novel by Ernest Hemingway, although the person need not actually *read* the novel in order to be culturally literate. Hirsch's cultural literacy also incorporates a "science" component: one should also have a general idea of who Watson and Crick were, and be able to connect their names to DNA and the "double helix." The sort of familiarity with key names and ideas required by Hirsch's notion of cultural literacy is meant to consolidate a common tradition and enable people within this tradition to communicate without having to provide an explanatory gloss on each reference.[1]

This is a standard characteristic of other notions of science literacy, as well. In *Towards* Scientific Literacy, Frederick Thomas and Allan Kondo note that a shared vocabulary of scientific terms is part of the foundation of science literacy (4-5), and indeed, one would be hard-pressed to come up with any convincing arguments refuting this claim. However, too often definitions of science literacy stop at this point; while Thomas and Kondo go on to present a sample curriculum which would introduce adult learners to some basic scientific concepts and practices, this curriculum does not provide the means of critically engaging with the expressions of scientific thought that they encounter every day.[2]

Hirsch's notion of cultural literacy presents difficulties for a multicultural society, perhaps because his list is a list of decontextualized facts, with no concern for social or historical processes. Without a critique of the processes which allow some facts to become culturally significant, while marginalizing others, Hirsch's list becomes an implement of exclusion: some things we must know, but other things we can dismiss as irrelevant. Clearly, such an approach to literacy cannot produce critically literate thinkers--not by itself, at any rate. Any list is inevitably incomplete, and needs to be supplemented by an awareness of the criteria used for judging the relative significance of the items on the list, or the means by which items might move on to or off of this list. A similar objection can be raised against Thomas and Kondo's formulation of science literacy; while their pedagogical approach would introduce students to basic forms of scientific reasoning, it would not clarify the social processes underlying how a fact becomes a fact.

However, while these general strategies for "literacy" are flawed, their insistence on a set of core ideas has relevance for the concept of scientific literacy. Hirsch's formulation of core ideas as static items in a list should be altered somewhat to foreground an understanding of processes--specifically social processes of discovery and verification that underpin what we consider to be scientific truth. This differs from Thomas and Kondo's emphasis on process, as their understanding of the term is limited only to experimental processes. But the fact-creating processes are social as much as scientific, and as such constitute a syntax that the non-scientist reader can follow.

Bruno Latour conceives of the development of scientific knowledge as a social as well as a scientific activity. He examines how scientists contest with one another to prove or disprove theories, which either are discarded or enter the realm of "fact"--but always provisionally. Facts can be reassessed, revised, or discarded. Science literacy requires an understanding of these ongoing processes of science: that is, the social processes of discovery, verification, and revision of scientific truths. Literacy in science requires an understanding of how the truth comes to be created, through debate and mounting alliances among scientists, and how it is based on political (broadly construed) in addition to scientific positions.[3]

"Literacy" is always a relative term; the level of ability designated by "literacy," that level that separates the literate from the illiterate, is both arbitrary and fluctuating. "Literacy" is evidenced in process--if we can read one sentence, we are for that moment literate; if the next sentence defeats us, we become "illiterate"--temporarily. Literacy is contextual; the goal of literacy programs is, of course, to make one "literate," capable of understanding, in as many contexts as possible.

Here, the ability to understand something becomes the key. But venturing into the world of science, how can one hope to understand all of the specialized and esoteric information that one encounters? All of the competing claims, all of the opposing theories? How is one to distinguish fact from theory? Most of us, when we think uncritically of science, think of it as a progression of facts, of objective and pre-cultural truth. We think that scientists work--and discover facts--in a value-free laboratory: that when they study sex difference, they are not affected by the social construction of gender; when they examine theories of biological change and diversity, they remain untouched by the social and economic conditions of the world they inhabit. We construe scientists as people who examine states outside of, or prior to, culture.

Yet evidence suggests that this is not the case. The laboratory is a part of our culture, and is affected by the same relations that permeate the rest of our world. As a consequence, we all have a stake in understanding what science does; we all have a responsibility to recognize that science is not value-free, and to critique actively the production of scientific truths.

In order to do this as interested *non*-scientists, we must develop a sense of some of the stress lines which run through scientific thought. This, fortunately, is not as difficult as it may seem--science is beset by many of the same tensions as the rest of society. A recognition of science as involving social processes does not, of course, license us to negate or ignore inconvenient scientific findings; however, it should heighten our awareness of the contextual and contingent nature of scientific truths and enable us to respond to scientific claims with some understanding of the issues involved. In short, an important aspect of the "science literacy" the layperson needs is that which locates science in society and opens to critical social debate scientific research and discoveries.

Still, thus far this sort of critique seems more easily prescribed than performed. Many of us, if encountering the latest issue of *Science* (much less *Physica Scripta*, or *Brain, Behavior and Immunity*), are overwhelmed by the numbers we cannot interpret, the graphs we cannot read, and the terminology we cannot understand. We are, in this realm, hopelessly illiterate. But science is not simply articles in journals--it's in technology, it's in government programs, it is, in fact, and as we all know, everywhere in our lives. And we can examine the goals, the effects, of science--here we are literate.

Much popular understanding of science is developed by the mass media, and educators need to recognize the media as a bountiful source of material for developing science literacy. Of course, the mass media complicates our reception of science, because readers must become media-literate as well as science-literate. However, because the mass media is an important disseminator of scientific knowledge, and is for most people the only source of science education after secondary school, students must be instructed in "media-science" literacy. Popular media can, in fact, provide us with some of the tools needed for understanding the "social" scientific processes of fact-making, but only if the media is approached critically. We must consider both the role of the media in propagating scientific knowledge, and the contribution of media to science literacy--or illiteracy.[4]

Before determining the role of media in propagating scientific knowledge, or ideas about scientific knowledge, we must begin by making a quick distinction between two types of media reports that present scientific knowledge: those that are directly concerned with scientific knowledge or discovery, and those that present news which, while not directly engaging "science" as a topic, nevertheless is associated closely with scientific issues. In the latter there is a science component, often one not overtly recognized, often recognized but marginalized, yet often the implicit foundation for whatever claims are being made.

Media reports of the first type, those that focus explicitly on science, and especially on scientific controversy, *usually* provide some tools for developing science literacy; this is often because the media itself identifies controversial elements in an effort to present an interesting or gripping narrative. Media reports of the second type, those that do not focus on science while presenting science-related issues, tend to promote scientific illiteracy by effacing the role of science in our society.

There are, however, factors that must be considered when we use the media to "discover" science. Fast-breaking and controversial science stories often lend themselves to superficial reportage and sloppy or non-existent follow-ups; when the story stops being new and exciting, it gets dropped. These reports must be supplemented by historical or philosophical examinations of science (or of a particular phenomenon), which can enrich the reader's awareness of the critical skills necessary to becoming "science literate." Latour's sociological analysis of the generation of scientific fact is useful here: when a reader recognizes that facts are socially as well as scientifically confirmed, the role of the media in eliciting this confirmation can be more energetically critiqued. Alternatively, when we accept "news" without being cognizant of the processes which make a statement or assertion possible, we come to accept as given that which should be investigated further, and in this way we allow ourselves to become scientifically illiterate.

Let me use as an example a recent science controversy presented in the Canadian media, the Philippe Rushton affair. Rushton, a professor whose theories of race characteristics and heredity were (quite rightly) widely condemned as racist, found media fame in February and March of 1989. Rushton, in a paper presented in January 1989 to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, claimed to have demonstrated that there were racial differences between three dominant racial groups that he termed "negroid," "caucasoid," and "mongoloid." People of Asian descent ("mongoloids"), he argued, were at the top of the human evolutionary scale, while whites ("caucasoids") were in the middle, and blacks ("negroids") at the bottom. This hierarchy, he said, was evidenced in differing general levels of intelligence, sex drive, and adherence to formal rules of conduct, and he presented a range of data from measurements of cranial circumference to details of genital characteristics as proof of biological difference.[5]

Media reports were generally of three types: initially, reports simply presented Rushton's thesis and observed that it was controversial; later, the media began to focus on the controversy itself; finally, some reports attempted to present a critical assessment of the terms of the debate. Reports that simply emphasized the controversy turned the issue into a media spectacle, and the tone of the debate was, while confrontational, not very critical. An awareness that scientific findings can be disputed, and indeed are disputed in professional circles, is an important part of science literacy, but it does not enable lay people to enter the debate with any intellectual vigour (moral vigour is, of course, another thing). Rather, it encourages us to be spectators, and to side with one team or the other without really knowing why we do so, other than that we find their science to be morally acceptable. Thus, while the moral thrust of most reports was decidedly against Rushton, members of the public could have been left feeling confused. The mass media version of the debate saw Rushton claiming that he was performing value-free science, while his opponents argued that he was performing racist science. The observer could be left wondering--if s/he were not scientifically literate--"how can science be racist if it is objective? what could be more objective than the sort of physical measurements used by Rushton?" Once we realize, though, that science does not--in truth, cannot--live up to its claims of pure objectivity, but instead is implicated in all of our social assumptions and their attendant tensions, new possibilities for understanding occur.

Occasionally, media reports of science issues do attempt a comprehensive analysis not only of the scientific findings, but also of the very nature of scientific work. The Rushton affair elicited a number of such examinations, in large part because of the particularly volatile public response to Rushton's conclusions. These articles, especially when read against those reports sensationalizing the controversy, provide thoughtful critiques which could serve as tools for learning critical "science literacy" skills, if only by serving as models for the types of science critiques that can be performed by people with a relatively good, but certainly not professional, understanding of the issues involved.[6] In most cases, however, the media does not present this type of critical counterpoint; for this reason, readers must develop their own critical skills.

Earlier I alluded to the "moral acceptability" of theories that guides our choice of sides in a sensationalized controversy, and noted that this sort of media report often incited a critique motivated by "moral vigour." There is indeed a slippery relation between moral and intellectual critiques of science. While we should be willing to make ethical critiques of scientific theories or practices, we must also make our claims intellectually valid or we risk being dismissed as ignorant, irrelevant, or obsolete (much as advocates of "creationism" are). Social tensions and stresses find their way into scientific research, and certainly Rushton's research betrays much associated with the racist thinking that permeates our society. This provides our entry point for examining the science being presented, but once we have entered, we must be able to understand the terms of the debate, and how these terms are deployed.

These terms define the basic suppositions of the science being debated; the more general and common the terms are, the more easily we can get involved. In the Rushton case, these terms are so general that we are all familiar with them--indeed, so familiar that we may even make some of the mistakes Rushton made is assuming that the terms are stable and absolute, thereby endorsing the "invisible" and uncritical science that goes unacknowledged in our daily lives. These terms--such as "race," "intelligence," "evolution," and "sex drive"--provide Rushton with the framework of his theory, yet all are unstable, rendering Rushton's criteria meaningless.

Theories of race, for instance, and the assumption that there are three main races, are based in a science that has, for cultural reasons, identified race as a significant marker of difference. Race is a notable scientific category because it is a cultural category, and its use to explain difference is a transfer of its social function into the laboratory. This becomes a more damning observation when we consider that the idea of race has also consistently been used to isolate and marginalize people. Certainly, the term "race" cannot be done without: it is too culturally meaningful. However, this does not make it a valid form of objective, biological categorization.[7]

"Evolution," too, denotes another contested and ill-defined concept. As Stephen Gould argues in *Wonderful Life*, the idea of "evolution" is often conflated with that of "progress," or survival of the fittest, both concepts which owe much to Victorian beliefs about society as well as to scientific research.[8] And yet, these terms generally remain uninterrogated. Only through a naive application of these terms could Rushton's theories be developed; similarly, only through a naive reception of them can Rushton's theories be accepted.

Media reports can be used effectively to illustrate the contingency of scientific truth, thereby enabling us to probe deeper into the unexamined categories that we think of as being scientifically stable: categories like "race" and "intelligence," both of which, while they do have a scientific component, are also largely culturally determined. The point here is for lay people to be able to engage with science and to have some understanding of its impact; we have to be able to locate the points where science intersects with society. We can never really hope to discuss the specific properties of DNA with geneticists, but we can bring to light some issues that geneticists should consider in their investigations, such as the nature of supposed scientific "impartiality" in identifying "genetic" traits. This simply means that we can make geneticists aware that some of the categories they are examining may not indeed be scientific categories, or not solely scientific at any rate, but also categories determined by cultural beliefs.[9] Here we can use our experience as social beings, as participants in a multicultural, poly-vocal world, to understand, partake of, and contribute to the scientific culture of that world.

Endnotes

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3. Latour, Bruno. *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1987.
4. There has been much debate over whether or not the media "fairly represent" science. However, given that, as Latour implies, scientific truth-making involves a significant amount of public-relations

propaganda, one can argue effectively that the media does more than simply "represent" science, but is also actively involved in producing scientific truths. A critical summary of various schools of thought on "media and science" is given by Christopher Doran, "Some problems in Conceptualizing the Issue of 'Science and the Media'," *Critical Studies in Mass Communications* 7 (1990): 48-71.

Doran's article also includes a comprehensive bibliography of writings on the interaction of science and the media. See also, in the same issue, Susanna Hornig's "Television's NOVA and the Construction of Scientific Truth," pp. 11-23, and Leah Lievrouw's "Communication and the Representation of Scientific Knowledge," pp. 1-10.

5. For recent versions of this work, see J. Philippe Rushton, "Mongoloid-Caucasoid Differences in Brain Size From Military Samples," *Intelligence* 15 (1991): 351-59; and "Cranial Capacity Related to Sex, Rank and Race in a Stratified Random Sample of 6,325 U.S. Military Personnel," *Intelligence* 16 (1992): 401-13.

6. A good example is provided by a series of articles written by Michael Ziegler, David Wiesenthal, Neil Wiener, and Fredric Weizmann, "Is science too eager to stake its claims?" *Globe & Mail* 3 Feb 1989: A7; "Philippe Rushton and the Growing Acceptance of 'Race Science'," *Canadian Forum* Sept 1989: 19-22; and "Differential K Theory and Racial Hierarchies," *Canadian Psychology* 31.1 (1990): 1-13. These articles are progressively more complicated critiques of Rushton's theories.

7. See Zeigler, Weisenthal, Wiener, and Weizmann, above

8. Gould, Stephen Jay. *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History*. London: Hutchison Radius, 1990.

9. There is much feminist criticism on the intersection of gender and genetics: see, for example, the two issues on feminism and science of *Hypathia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 2.3 (Fall 1987) and 3.1 (Spring 1988); Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986) and *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking*

from Women's Lives (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991); Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories About Women and Men* (New York: Norton, 1979); and Donna Haraway, "In the Beginning was the Word: The Genesis of Biological Theory," *Signs* 6.3 (1981).

THE CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE AND THE REPORT OF THE ABORIGINAL JUSTICE INQUIRY OF MANITOBA: REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER AND RACE ACROSS SEVERAL MEDIA

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On November 13, 1971, in the northern Manitoba town of The Pas, a young Cree woman. Helen Betty Osborne was abducted by four young white men as she walked alone late at night. She was sexually assaulted and brutally murdered with a screwdriver. It took over 16 years for her abductors, Jim Houghton, Norm Manger. Dwayne Johnston and Lee Colgan to be brought to trial. Only two of the four, Houghton and Johnston, were charged as there was Insufficient evidence against Normi Manger and Lee Colgan was granted immunity for testifying. A jury conspicuously absent of Native people found Johnston guilty and acquitted Houghton.

Racism and sexism were at the core of this horrible crime. Helen Betty Osborne was murdered because she was a Native woman who resisted being raped. Testifying before the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba. Lee Colgan admitted they decided to pick up a Native woman because they thought she would be "easier" and less likely to complain than a white girl. Lisa Priest, a journalist who covered the trial for *The Winnipeg Free Press*, claimed in her best-seller, *Conspiracy of Silence*, that everyone in the town knew who the killers were, but no one came forward because of their racism towards Native people and the indifference of the police force to the case.

Although there was little national media coverage of the original murder and its investigation, Helen Betty Osborne's story became well-known to the Canadian public when the four men were finally brought to trial in 1987, after the publication of Priest's novel (1989), as a result of the inquiry which was widely reported and televised from 1989-90 and published in 1991, and finally because of the November 1991 CBC docudrama, "Conspiracy of Silence", based on Priest's novel.

According to Bernard Zukermall, the producer of the mini-series, "Conspiracy of Silence" offers an important message about racism. "There's plenty of racism in Canada, but this example was more flagrant than most." Most media critics concur with Zukerman's claim: reactions to the docudrama have been extremely enthusiastic. According to *The Globe and Mail* television critic, John Haslett Cuff, "the simmering four hour mini-series is not just another sensationalistic docudrama. powered by Suzette Couture's terse, understated script, it is also a portrait of a nationwide intolerance that fosters beneath the official facade of multiculturalism."

Media theorist, Stuart Hall has called for a new anti-racist consensus at a popular level and alternative media practices to "bend the twig of a racist commonsense" which currently dominates popular thinking. In "The Whites of their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media", Hall discusses how we do not see our own racism. He argues that it must be understood as "structures, practices and discourses and not as simply something that emanates from certain individual human beings." In his analysis he makes the useful distinction between overt and inferential racism. I would add another category that Hall implies, but which the *Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba* makes clear: systemic racism. The inquiry and Hall's work in this area can help us understand the limitations of the *Conspiracy of Silence*. His insights also can be extended to include sexism. However, we must make this inclusion carefully so that we do not inadvertently perpetuate another violent action.

Mohawk activist/lawyer Patricia Montour-Okanee offers a moving challenge to the feminist discussion of racial discrimination and gender discrimination.

> *The whole idea of the double discrimination that is race and gender just does not work. I mean, look at me. I do not separate that way. My race and gender are all in one package. My race does not come apart from my woman.*
>
> *Once it is understood that I do not come apart, the entire discussion of discrimination as "double" must be understood to fall. I cannot trace the discrimination I live to one source-race or gender. It is better described*

> *as "discrimination within discrimination." It is complex and certainly not linear (195).*

Montour-Okanee calls on women to pay attention to the social and historical particularities of this complex doubling. To ignore this is a form of silencing and this silencing is another form of violence.

> *You, as women (academics, activists and/or feminists), must talk about race if you are to continue to commIt yourself to the commonality of all women.*
>
> *It hurts me (and that hurt is violence) that you keep asking me to silence my race under my gender. Silencing me is the hurt which is violence (194).*

It is clear that we need more programming in the mass media that deals with the violence that results from sexism and racism. Does the "Conspiracy of Silence" offer an alternative view that transforms our vision? The ratings were extremely high, and the four-hour show has been sold and aired to CBS. It's popularity seems to indicate a willingness amongst Canadians to be confronted with its existence. How does the docudrama like the "Conspiracy of Silence" contribute to an anti-sexist and anti-racist common sense?

This focus of this workshop will be an evaluation of the representation of this racism and sexism in this particular case, across several media. We will look at a short section from Priest's book, a sampling of news stories that covered both the Inquiry and the docudrama, which was also treated as news, as well as a clip from the show. The fictionalized re-representation of the murder of Helen Betty Osborne in the television show raises many questions:

> How do we responsibly depict violence against women? Did the show help a national audience, to whom it was addressed, understand violence against aboriginal women, or did it distance us from the event by sensationalizing this racism and violence?
>
> How are sex and race portrayed in the story line, the character, and the visual narrative of the text?

> What are the strengths and limitations of the docudrama format? Were the lines of fact and fiction blurred?
>
> What kind of media and historical literacy do we need to understand a show like "Conspiracy of Silence" intellectually and emotionally?

While critics lauded the show for its depiction of racist and sexist intolerance, we must be attentive to its limitations and prepared to discuss it's representation of violence, injustice, racism and sexism. One way to do this is to examine how the show's version of the events differs from both Priest's novel, the inquiry, and the media response to both. The novel and the inquiry result in very different conclusions and recommendations: the former demands individual responsibility and retribution, the latter recommends structural changes, including Aboriginal self-government. What does the docudrama implicitly recommend? Clearly contextualizing an event is one way to influence how it will be interpreted.

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INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA LITERACY

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The world is rushing toward the 21st century at an incredible speed. There is no question that we are experiencing an information revolution. Technology has transformed not only the work place and home but also our image of ourselves. The question that must be asked is whether young people are being lost in the rush. The socio-cultural changes created as a result of advancements in technological information processing are resulting in a gap between what education is preparing students for, and what they will have to face as adults in society. There is an even greater need to prepare those who are struggling within the traditional educational system. If we are going to help young people meet the demands of an economic system driven by technology, then it will be necessary to provide a learning environment that responds to, and is understanding of, the students' needs and milieu.

It is not enough to try and shape young people to fit into an economic system based on employability skills alone. We must also provide a pedagogy that acknowledges the personal world and cultural politics of the students. Ours is a world in which we sometimes forget that young people are just that - young, and that their world is not necessarily the same as the adults' world. Yet both worlds do share and experience a growing dependence on the electronic media rather than the print media for information, entertainment, and communication.

Literacy in a Media Dominated Society

My teaching experience has left some serious questions in my mind about our conception of traditional literacy. At the outset let me state that I do not suggest that the manner in which we have regarded print literacy is no longer valid. Nor do I argue that print has or is losing its value. On the contrary, as computer technology expands, print is bound to increase in importance (even with the onset of voice activated technology). What I do suggest (as others have also) is that each new medium builds on the previous ones. Thus, writing replicated oral language, print expanded writing to the masses and the electronic media extends out beyond these. New media do not replace old media but rather add to the way information is constructed, conveyed and perceived, and internalized. More importantly the new media changes our perceptions, values, and therefore our social behaviour.

What we have not done in education and in society as a whole is to acknowledge that while print has not lost its value, it has lost its dominance. More to the point, we have not considered a concept of literacy that accommodates behaviour that includes the electronic media such as television and video. According to a commissioned survey on literacy in Canada, literacy was defined as "using printed and written information to function in society to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (Literacy in Canada, 1987, p.6). This reflects UNESCO's (1978) earlier definition of a literate person "who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement in her/his everyday life". Such definitions consider print literacy as a priority for the individuals and society. They represent the predominance of print in the numerous attempts to research and document literacy in Modern Western Society. However, as Graff (1987) remind us, changes in literacy usually mean major kinds of changes in individuals and societies (p, 27). Neither UNESCO's definition nor our present thinking about literacy reflect what it means to be literate in today's multi-media society.

It is suggested that literate behaviour includes the ability to read and write all forms of discourse - including oral, written and visual discourse (Ministry of Education of Québec 1982, Language Arts Curriculum). With this in mind the question that must now be addressed is what are the principal changes and developments in curriculum and pedagogy that are implied in a notion of literacy that includes all of these discourses.

We must at the outset realize that in thinking about media literacy, I am referring ta a methodology that enables students to demystify how the media are constructed, why the media are constructed in the manner they are and for whom they are constructed (Greer, 1990). First, it is necessary to restate that in order for students to make a meaningful and easy transition from a world dominated by popular culture to a world based on special, economic and political issues, it is necessary to understand that students come to school with an enormous amount of media experience. What is needed is to help students understand the link between the text, industry and the audience in this case themselves.

Media education or media literacy not only makes these links but also encourages the students to create their own media communication pieces.

Because of time constraints we will deal with four key concepts in the field of media literacy. When teaching media literacy a legal constraint appears, copyright laws. Films and videos from the National Film Board of Canada are rented and sold with public performance rights, which means that they can be legally shown in classrooms across the country. Therefore we will use National Film Board (N.F.B.) films to demonstrate the concepts.

Concept #1: Media constructs reality, what techniques are used by the media to create something that you can accept as "real"?

Film - NFB - *Zea*. Please watch the first 2 $^{1/2}$ minutes of this film and try to identify what you are watching. Be as creative as possible? Why didn't you realize what it was?

Concept #2: Audience negotiates meaning. How does each audience member understand and interpret what they see and hear?

Film - NFB - *Ecoutez-Voir, Listen You'll See*. Do you agree with the labels attached to each sequence? why or why not?

Concept #3: All media constructions have commercial implications. Who benefits economically, how, and why? Therefore who becomes the programming decision-maker.

Film - NFB - *Distress Signals*

Concept #4: Media constructions contain implicit and explicit values. Does the visual message match the auditory message? If not, what value is being expressed?

Film - NFB - *Careers and Cradles*
NFB - *Mother Earth*

(POSTER SESSION)

CROSSING BORDERS: BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Shanti Thakur
Lucida Films
(with)
Leith Hamilton
Community Activist

The Incidents

On July 21, 1991 in a peaceful residential area in Montreal, a murder took place outside the Black Community Council of Quebec (BCCQ). A dance was ending when four men arrived and opened fire with automatic guns, murdering a woman and injuring two men. bullets were strewn everywhere. The ambulance and the police were delayed in arriving. Neighbours' cars were damaged, their windshields destroyed.

The print and broadcast news not only sensationalized the fact that a *white* woman was shot by *black* men, but also drew attention to the fact that the incident was an example of black-on-black crime. As soon as violence occurs in Montreal's black community, it becomes a "racial" incident. As one neighbour observed, *"It was complete pandemonium. When a crisis occurs, peoples' racism comes to the surface. White people were screaming racist names at blacks and vice versa. It was disgusting."*

Following the media coverage, some neighbours called police and City Hall anonymously and asked them to close the centre down. In the meantime, the BCCQ received bomb threats and racist hate calls over the phone. The black women working at the centre were frightened that they would suffer violence as revenge for the death of a white woman.

Advocacy Video: The Roots of "Crossing Borders"

The Black English-speaking community in Montreal is the subject of continued negative stereotyping within the mainstream media for a number of reasons. There are very few representatives from this or other "visible minorities" working in media institutions and only a handful work as senior decision makers. Furthermore, journalists' deadlines do not allow sufficient time for individuals from outside these communities to integrate themselves into the various communities, or to become sensitized to the issues (and the emotional minefields!). Moreover, the Quebec media has tended to devote its time and space to the continuing debate between the French and English-speaking communities, ignoring the changing demographies of Montreal. As a result, we find predictable, one dimensional portrayals of members of minority groups. Media attention is focused on blacks only when the tragedies occur.

There is a clear dissonance between the way that the Black community sees itself and the way in which it is depicted by the media in Quebec. As one neighbour of the BCCQ put it, *"The media took shots of the blood on the street. But when it came to scraping the layers behind it, they didn't even come close."*

Accordingly, after the shooting outside the offices of the BCCQ the Director at the time, Leith Hamilton, contacted me to ask if I could use video as a tool to explore the dynamics behind this tragedy and to turn a crisis into a "window of opportunity" for change.

I immediately thought of the National Film Board of Canada's advocacy media model *CHALLENGE FOR CHANGE* used in the '60's and '70's. The model for "Crossing Borders" had three objectives: to use video as a tool to mobilize communities to communicate; to decrease the sense of anonymity; and finally, to build bridges between the communities and to work towards mutual goals.

With the misinformation distributed by the print and broadcast media, both communities needed to redefine who they were to one another in their own voices. Collaboration between the BCCQ, the neighbours and the videomakers was essential.

The video "Crossing Borders" portrays the evolution of the process over the past year. The project consists of two stages. First, members of each community (the black community workers and the neighbours) were interviewed separately. Each group screened the "other" group's interviews and their reactions were filmed. The second phase brought both communities together to screen the developments over the past year. When the time came to meet, both sides had heard each others' points of view.

Politics of Production

In order to gain trust from media-wary participants, we ensured that everyone had the right to screen their rushes and to omit anything they regretted saying. Secondly, everyone had the right to screen the edited version before the "other" community screened it. If they felt that material was absent or needed to be added, we would comply. The Montreal Urban Police had initially been invited to participate in the production. They refused, expressing fear over their lack of control of the video's content and citing previous bad experiences with the media.

At first, the BCCQ staff were cautious about talking about the event out of fear that they would be held responsible for its occurrence. Moreover, they did not want to be blamed if property values on the street decreased. The insurance company had already refused to renew their policy, citing the news reports as grounds for doing so.

Over the course of the year, however, several other violent incidents occurred at other black community events. The black leaders felt that they had to start defining their point of view publicly, but in a forum which they trusted. The community to which they had devoted their lives was now under siege due to the violence caused by a few isolated youth. To their distress, these individuals were from their own community. The leaders wanted to give the message that, *"Hooligans who break the law must be held accountable."*

On their side, the neighbours of the BCCQ felt confused about being labelled a "community" simply by virtue of their geographical position. Typical of urban dwellers, alienation led people to ask where their community existed. Anonymity between the neighbours had to be broken down as well.

Upon beginning "Crossing Borders", we believe that the main bridge to be built was between the workers at the BCCQ and the neighbours. In fact, we discovered that each community had to reflect upon *who they were as a community* in order to communicate effectively to the "other" community.

The Results

Both the BCCQ community workers and the neighbours were pleased with the final version of "Crossing Borders". A community organisation in the district of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG - where the murder occurred) organized a "village forum" on building a multicultural coalition. The video and the process of making it was used as a concrete example of community building. This forum was the first in a series to develop on a pragmatic level around the issues of public security, education and social policy.

After finishing "Crossing Borders", Leith and I met to develop a strategy to not only "market" the video, but also to use it as a tool for social change. The objective was to communicate the possibility of new partnerships within diverse communities based upon the "goodwill" demonstrated through the communication process seen in the video. The strategy involved developing a partnership with the NDG Community Council, the City of Montreal, the Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration and other cultural communities to promote a positive vision of a diversified community with a focus on communication as a first step.

It has been gratifying to see the reactions to "Crossing Borders". Resolving the conflict between two cultural communities is the immediate benefit. But just as important, I have seen that advocacy video has acted as a public educational tool which has reframed the "objective" information that the mainstream media put out.

It is obvious that the media remain a major player in the construction of the reality of everyday life for many in the mainstream. For those on the margin, video advocacy becomes an important mechanism to recapture their real voice. Not only was the message of "Crossing Borders" given legitimacy on the mainstream TV channels, but the video was used for presentations to community groups, students and policy advisors in government. The lesson learned: communicate diversity effectively and there is a groundswell of support to be tapped.

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SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY IN THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DOMAIN

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"Functional Illiteracy (is) the inability to use reading and writing with facility in daily life. Widespread illiteracy severely hampers economic and social development; it is also a gross violation of the basic human right to learn, know and communicate" (Unesco Literacy Definition, 1988).

This functional illiteracy affects one North American in five. Five million Canadians and one million Quebecois (5:1), and indeed Statistics Canada quotes an even higher statistic of 44% of Quebecois, (1:a-5) lack the ability to deal with the reading tasks of day to day living: letters, memos, bills, prescriptions, tax data, manuals, forms, transcripts and yellow pages (4:47); 1:67,35; 15:13). 20% or 44% depending on which statistic you prefer - 20% or 44% of those who will vote Yes or No in what is probably the most important political question of our life, lack the functional ability to read the transcript of the Wilhelmy- Tremblay bedroom conversation. The condition Functional Illiteracy may be attributed (among other factors,) to immigration, to different motivations and cultures, to lack of education here or elsewhere,(15:22-29) and, in the scientific and technological domain, to extremely focused and slanted education.

Functional illiteracy touches the spectrum of scientific and technical literature from the interface, which, in western newspapers, has begun a large-print, easy reading section, to the commercial-industrial setting, in which a major telephone company has issued an easy vocabulary manual, to the bureaucratic or governmental scene which has simplified thousands of forms,(15:51) to the formal academic setting where some potential graduates pay five dollars per page to have their theses' grammar proofread.

The consequences of illiteracy in its various degrees are financial, social, medical, political, ethical and professional (15:32,41; 5:2):

- financial because the poorly educated are among the first laid off, costing the state lost taxes and expensive social programs

(15:32); because literacy mastered beyond its functional threshold earns monetary rewards for its possessors; because literacy is not only a right or an obligation; it is an economic value (9:159,161);

- social because illiteracy is an embarrassing problem with far reaching ramifications (11:42): illiteracy becomes part of a person's social state and character and is almost a crutch (16:71);
- medical because lack of awareness of problems and symptoms is a killer;
- political because literacy is a tool for critical thinking and if one lacks it one cannot fathom concepts of racism, bias, ethics, plagiarism, discretion, rationale and obfuscation; because an unaware electorate is a danger: a literate and educated population is the cornerstone of democracy (4:xiii);
- ethical because to function is not the same as to thrive and grow (4:xiii); and
- professional because if society is not equipping students to function, they drop out (11:42); because professionals who do not function outside their spheres are dealing solely with matter and not with other human beings; and because highly trained technical people who are isolated into science and math are functionally illiterate in the humanities, functionally illiterate of the human condition.

Two kinds of technical-scientific illiteracy concern us in this workshop: 1) the inability or difficulty of the highly mathematically and scientifically trained, to express and structure non-technical ideology and judgement, and 2) the inflationary scientific-technological illiteracy stemming from the hourly big bang technical expansion.

The proliferation of printed matter is a global process and few are unaffected, with more written information in circulation than ever before (9:167), with a corresponding increase in the complexity of the content. The translation of scientific and technical development into consumer products and services increasingly brings this problematic information into the home (9:167) in the form of warranties, leasing conditions, pension schemes, dental plans, poison antidotal steps, contest rules, tool tags, assembly instructions, especially in a world where more and more, labour costs force us to "do it yourself."

It is at the same time a condition of late 20th century specialized life, that those with a higher education may be unable to apply their resources outside their own specializations. The scientist or engineer may become functionally illiterate reading about international negotiations in a free trade arrangement concerning his/her own field. Even within the narrow boundaries of his/her technical knowledge, the expert may be poorly equipped to transmit ideas or express judgements on events even within specific spheres (9:168).

There is an ideal of functional literacy for all but there is no fixed level of attainment. Literacy is inflationary. Literary competence is increasingly required where once a respectable job record sufficed. Long-serving employees predating the microchip explosion, and shop floor workers accustomed to learning high level skills on the job, and farm workers following government specifications spreading fertilizer, now are expected to possess a literacy and a numeracy previously unessential to their being hired (9:163-64). The consequences of this process of inflation is that standards of literacy must reach well beyond the sphere of work, and affect those all the way up the functional literacy ladder, to the scientifically and technologically competent.

Now consider a high school student who gets 60% in English, in French, history, geography and moral and religious education, and let us admit that in a realistic world that 60% is often a 55 or 57 that got pushed. Then this hacker gets 98% in computer science, 95% in physics, 85% in chemistry and 88% in math. His or her average is now high enough to get into CEGEP where the same thing happens and he/she gets into Concordia University or McGill. To the engineer or the computer scientist fiction may not be user-friendly. He or she squeaks through the language and option requirements and proceeds to do brilliantly in computer science and math virtually almost without acquiring any complementary background at all.

People like the foregoing are comfortable with numbers but not with words, and we deny them the luxury of the vicarious experience of literature, of the shades of meaning cast by a perceptive author, of the inductive thinking of political science or philosophy, of the perspicacity of a pertinent vocabulary.

To counter the condition of illiteracy in its widest adult literacy programs are in progress through a growing number of adult centers(4:3-22; 11:168-92; 15:72), but some of the programs initiated, or steps embarked upon to counter illiteracy, may have far reaching consequences. The cure needs as much investigation as the disease, for among the counters to illiteracy is the Plain Language Movement.

The simplification of language includes the downgrading of newspaper language to the Dick and Jane level, like *Newsreader* in B.C.; the elimination of the relationships of concepts in a mature, embedded sentence as suggested in the government's *Plain Language* handbook, the loss of finesse and nuance of erudite diction and its truncation of thought following an abridged vocabulary like the *AT&T Manual*, and the Gobbledygook Test which claims as its criterion of obscurity the number of words of more than "x" syllables per sentence and the number of long sentences in a paragraph. Its inventor claims, and perhaps rightfully, "in general, short words in short sentences that express clear thoughts are much more readable than multisyllabic monstrosities expressing meandering musings" (Whiteley, 18) and that may be true. However syllables and length alone do not make things obscure. Usage and familiarity make style understandable. Specific bits of scientific stuff in this Easy English Movement become very accessible, but the vocabulary to access thought in general diminishes. "You've got a bunch of empiricists trying to describe things of unimaginable wonder." (Watterson, "Calvin and Hobbes," 1992, 17).

What we should be doing is adding, not subtracting. When we depress structures, when we eliminate words from our vocabulary, we shrink the power of critical thinking, and the faculty and facility to transmit ideas. If we drop the words in which we read, we drop the words in which we think.

This conference was touted from its brochure as a conference for "all those interested in improving the standard of literacy in our society" (Dimensions of Literacy in a Multicultural Society, 1992). There is a difference between deliberate obfuscation and the language which obscures, and nuances of the language which defines (3:20; 10:12,15-17,28-29). The most dangerous journey is that of a thought-- few thoughts travel intact from the intellect of the sender to the intellect of the receiver. To give thoughts their precise meaning requires all the words and structures made available to us over the generations.

In our response to functional illiteracy, in our genuine effort to break down the language designed to impress rather than communicate, and to make scientific and technical material accessible to the everyday person, we restrict language, and our university graduates now lack the vocabulary to pass the federal public service exams. A full 44% of university students at Bishop's University in Quebec recently failed their essay assessment test eliciting the following comment from the Writing Program Co-ordinator: "When I look at what students are asked to write in high school, and what they're not asked to read, it doesn't inspire confidence...also multiple-choice exams (have)...been...terrible for student writing" (Mieke Koppen Tucker, co-ordinator of the writing program at Bishop's). In bringing the language to the audience rather than the audience to the language, in the technical stress on mathematics and science, we may be denying our graduates jobs.

"...the man on the street..." is a euphemism for "...use shorter words..." (Paul,13) .

To bring the language to the speaker, or bring the speaker to the language, both concepts involve principles which are in themselves correct, but there are consequences to grading up or grading down. Since a literate element continues to exist and function, indeed forms 80% of our population, "Simplified English" will have as its prime effect the emphasis of a two- class intellectual society: those that can read and those that cannot.

The Plain Language Movement offers in its genuine simplicity, an absence of communicative intention with sentences provided "unwrapped" with their conditions and connections offered as separate periods. Because the writer's associating intentions are unclear, the reader must actually second guess the writer.

Consider the following example in its original form and subsequently in its Simple English form from *Newsreader* via Janet Giltrow's Learned Society's Conference paper: "Rescuers say a cellular phone helped get two stranded men off coquitlam's Burke Mountain. When the two snow surveyors got stranded late Saturday they simply dialled 911 from the mountain's 900-meter (3000-foot) level and asked to be rescued."

The rewrite:

1. two men got stranded on a mountain in Coquitlam
2. they telephoned 911 for help
3. volunteers rescued them

4. the two men were snow surveyors
5. they had a cellular phone with them
6. they were at the 900 meter level (7:3).

The rewrite sentences are in order but the transition is lost, the deduction is lost, and the punch line is lost. When we strip down sentences we strip off our way of delivering a message; culture means our style of doing things and saying things; when we strip off humour or patterns of delivery, we strip off culture and society. Our writing genres have developed over decades, and deliberately adjusting them is Orwellian. We are used to speaking and writing in certain ways. We (and this includes those at all levels of literacy) recognize social situations and academic levels from genre forms we are used to. The styles that embody these characteristics maintain the social and cultural situations from which they come. They identify for us.

Instead of toning down I would tone up: increase the philosophy and humanities requirements of engineering and computer science students to stimulate not only their vocabulary but the deductive and inductive reasoning processes that go with the territory, stop spending money on investigations which have already been performed, like the planned 1993 national evaluation of Canadian teenagers,(1:a-5) and channel the funds into literary programs, many of which are thriving and pulling their students off the breadlines and into retraining, but which are threatened with cuts, initiate formal technical literacy programs. We're sitting ducks to be functionally illiterate in the science and technology of the future, because technology advances so swiftly that we are in danger of returning to functional illiteracy as our vocabulary fails to meet new material. We all need continual scientific updating, not simplification.

Technical literacy involves an intricate vocabulary, within its field precise and extensive (14:120-21). We are not doing anyone a favour by oversimplifying English, when jobs require a vocabulary of expertise and critical dimensions. The technology of the future is not going to simplify itself to suit AT&T, and technologists who can manage an extensive, pertinent vocabulary within their job, can manage anywhere.

As technology advances and the vocabulary of technology increases, the profits and benefits will fall heavily on those who understand it--the already privileged and propertied groups--the shareholders, their employees and entrepreneurs, in a new social system in which theoretical knowledge gives a professional elite awesome power. There is a further danger of a threat to civil liberties because of enhanced surveillance and social control by the state and by rich corporations able to support databases containing millions of records (9:197).

There are social aspects to being an engineer; there are social aspects to being a computer programmer and a physicist. Fiction, philosophy, political science and the vocabulary they incorporate involve the human condition technologists will encounter in their daily tasks. Education, moreover, is for life, and life involves interaction, leisure, and the possibility of change, and we had better be prepared, as many of my generation have had to be, to handle changing jobs in midstream.

We need a general awareness of words and their relationships and this can be taught (14:55). The process of comprehension and learning can be enhanced by various techniques:

- by drop-in literary centers for the severely illiterate (9:181);
- by free adult centers in every area, with available day-care for literacy or technical literacy or complementary literacy programs (4:87);
- by legislated tax credits for those enrolled in all literacy programs (4:87);
- by industrial commitment to technical literacy through in-work or lunch hour update programs, by self help manuals from manpower organizations;
- by educational TV and closed circuit commuter programs;
- by increased humanities requirements in science and engineering post secondary programs.

Simplifying language starts people off but in a closed room; true literacy opens doors to unimaginable wonder.

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(POSTER SESSION)

SCIENTIFIC LITERACY FOR WOMEN

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Lorri Neilsen has defined literacy as "being at home in the world in which we choose to live. We feel literate," she said in an address included in the 1990 McGil' Writing Seminar Series, "to the degree to which we can shape our environment."

To what extent, however, have women been free to choose the world in which they would like to establish meaningful connections? To what extent have woman been encouraged and enabled to shape the worlds which they might choose? These questions have been of particular concern to us as researchers of feminist pedagogy in the physical science, an area in which women continue to be significantly underrepresented (Canada, Industry, Science, and Technology, 1991). Our concerns have drawn us to begin listening to the voices of young women entering science, and to allow these voices to guide us toward pedagogical means for their empowerment. As we have proceeded with our research, we have come to explore the ways in which language can provide not only points of entry for woman to the scientific disciplines, but a way in which their voices may become part of the ongoing discourse of scientific enquiry.

Much as been written on the various discourse communities of the academy, and how important it is for post-secondary instructors to introduce students to the rhetorical principles, forms and vocabulary of their particular disciplines (Bazerman and Paradis, 1990; McLeod, 1988). Indeed, much of the energy no focused on Writing-Across-the-Curriculum programs is spent encouraging subject-area teachers to take an active part in such instruction, and to make explicit the requirements which students will have to fulfil. For obvious reason, these are central areas of concern in education; however, this emphasis o the process of discourse mastery presupposes that students are, actually or potentially, part of the "community" of values and interests which are reflected in the constructions of the discipline, that they will either feel empathy with the subject matter or, at least, that they will be willing to suspend their disbelief. The stance implied by this approach is, and should be, disturbing to many women.

An examination of the way in which language is commonly used to define and describe the scientific enterprise illustrates most clearly the extent to which the discipline is shaped by values and behaviours that continue to be exclusive of and discouraging to women. Both the experts and those who aspire to enter the domain of scientific expertise employ this language. Thus, it is a matter of some import to us, that, in the sciences, the relative absence among degree holders and practitioners corresponds to a remarkable feminization of the object scientific enquiry.

Carolyn Merchant has observed that Nature as female is the most powerful image in Western science (Easlea, 1987). From Francis Bacon's conception of "the new science" as "a force that can hound, conquer and subdue Nature (Keller, 1985) to the seduction envisioned by the twentieth century high-energy physicist Frank Close, whose Nature "hides her secrets in subtle ways" (Easlea, 1987), the language used to define the scientific enterprise reflects a gendered point of view.

Indeed, it is this language, sexualized and territorial, which has served as a sign post for researchers interested in tracing the structural and institutional roots of the various scientific disciplines. Brian Easlea and Sally Hacker are excellent examples of researchers who have proceeded this way. Their exploration of the connections between the military and physics and engineering, respectively, should remind us that literacy in these fields has traditionally been, and continues to be, achieved by performance in an environment which emphasizes discipline, rigour, and control and which, it could certainly be argued, is, therefore, well-suited to a particular type of masculinity.

Evelyn Fox Keller (1985) argues that the gendered nature of science is also reflected in the way that objectivity is defined in the sciences, as a distance between the knower and the object of knowledge. She suggest that such distancing of the self serves the interests of what we identify as a masculine personality type, that is, an identity forged and maintained through separation from the (feminine) mother. In this sense, she says, objectivity is better understood an objectivist idealogy-- a construction which protects the masculine knower who remains hidden in a disguise of neutrality.

From this point of view, the passive voice of the scientific report, admitting of no doubts or ambiguities, is particulary striking example of how issues of gender find expression in the sciences.

The language of science reflects values and behaviours which are inextricable related to the exclusion of women from the sciences. If women are now to assume a meaningful place in this domain, it is our contention that other forms of language will have an important role to play. In our research in the are of physics, widely perceived to be "the hardest" of the "hard" sciences, we have looked to writing-in-the-learning process as an important and empowering experience for women. From the very first, this form of writing was introduced in an effort to provide an alternative space for woman students who are less likely than their male counterparts to speak out in the traditional classroom setting (Spender, 1980 and 1982). We also hoped that writing in a more personal voice would encourage women students to become more actively engaged in the class and that the greater informality of this writing would serve to reduce tension and intimidation.

The form which this writing has taken in the work which we are doing with college physics teachers is called Question and Answer Box. The teachers who have been using this strategy instruct students to write one full page, once every two weeks, describing a difficulty they are having with a particular question, some particulary interesting solution they have found, or some aspect of physics they would like to discuss with the teacher. Thus, students are given an opportunity to write informally about what is on their minds, and to form additional and individual connections with both subject matter and teacher in a learning situation which involves large and mixed classes and is very problem=centred, decontextualized, and driven by the need to "cover material". By virtue of this strategy, all students are offered an alternative means of connecting to the teacher. The evidence to date suggests that this strategy has been empowering for many students and that it has had particular impact upon women for several reasons.

For instance, in one given set of submissions in a class of 48 students, no less that 14 students raises an identical question regarding the concept of integration, knowledge of which the physics course presupposes. In every case, the student prefaced or concluded the question with an expression of certainty that she (12 of the 14 women, thought the class was well-balanced as to gender) was the only student who did not understand the concept, and therefore could not ask the question in class. This personalised form of writing afforded these students an opportunity to speak, the possibility of availing themselves of this opportunity, and the evidence that their intervention had impact, that is, that is resulted in the placing of their issues upon the classroom agenda. In other, less dramatic cases, we see over and over again young women apologetically asking for clarification, tentatively putting forth their won explanations, and ruminating upon issues such as rote learning versus comprehension and physics so remote to them. From the teacher's point of view, expanding the range of discourse in the physics class changes the context in which he or she has traditionally operated: the learning environment comes to include a wider range of issues from a wider range of students. In this sense, the pedagogy serves to democratize the classroom and we begin to see how a new pedagogy might, over time, actually re-shape the curriculum.

This immediate access to the teacher and the unmistakable message that the teacher is ready to provide individualized attention are what students principally focus upon in their evaluations of the strategy: however, interesting gender differences are beginning to emerge in this area. In the data which we have analyzed so far, approximately 90% of the women have been positive about their experience with the writing, in contrast to 50% of the men. What is even more striking is the fact that about 45% of the women students made reference to the affective role of writing in their experience of the course, whereas affective matters were mentioned by only about 15% of the men. Typical of the women's responses in this regard is the following: *I think it's a great idea and should definitely be continued. If nothing else it showed me (and will show future students) the devotion you have...when a teacher is so willing to help, the student is bound to try their best.*

Not surprisingly, in experimental classes where this strategy has been in place, post-semester attitude-to-physics surveys show significantly more positive attitudes to both teachers and subject matter. These positive changes are evident in the responses of both women and men, but they are more dramatic among the women and quite possibly more important to them, given the fact that, semester after semester, among the students we have tested, women ordinarily tend to develop more negative attitudes to physics than do men as their exposure to the subject increases. It also seems likely that a positive relationship with the teacher is more important for some students than for others and a good deal of our data suggests that women are over-represented among these more "connected" learners (Belenky et al. 1986). Women students focus more upon the affective dimension of the relationships with teachers in their written work and their interviews with us. Women students are much more likely that their male peers to "feel the need" to seek out personalised attention from the physics teacher by going to his or her office. Without a positive relationship with the teacher, they are blocked from one of their preferred learning situations.

Personal writing does not, at this juncture, enjoy particulary favourable repute. The deconstructionist critique of the concept of unitary self has brought into serious question the validity of lyric utterance (Jardine and Smith, 1987). Discourse theorists have suggested that the search for authentic voice is a chimaera, and that what has been called writing from the self actually involves the adoption of a voice acceptable to a particular audience at a particular time in history (Faigley, 1989). In education, a strong back-to-basics movement begins to take the attention away from the personal development and to focus it much more upon successful mastery and reduction of student drop-out rates, particulary those of men (Conseil superieur de l'education du Quebec, 1992). It is rather ironic that all this should take place while women are still outsiders to so much of higher education, and at a time when evidence is mounting to suggest that the self-conscious exploration of personal and affective issues in the classroom is an important part of the process by which women will come to claim a place for themselves in the sciences.

These tensions and contradictions lie at the very heart of the literacy issue which our research is concerned. Though is has been difficult to persuade many science instructors to reconsider their pedagogy, we have found some male and female teachers willing and anxious to explore these methods with us. However, providing a comfortable point of entry for women is only the beginning. Once their issues are on the agenda, the whole masculine pedagogy may be open to challenge and to change. Perhaps this is why the opposition to personal, affective, and "soft" approaches is so fierce. Equally, however, we see these as hopeful and exciting times:for women, for education, and for the scientific enterprise.

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COMPUTERS AND THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE LITERACY LEARNER

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It pleases me that culture or multiculturalism is the theme of this Congress on literacy. Rarely do we see today a recognition of the importance of literacy for culture whereby individuals of any ethnic or national group can, as contributors and participants in culture, enjoy the intellectual and emotive rewards of culture. For inasmuch as the great philosopher and mathematician A. N. Whitehead spoke of culture as *"the best that has been said and done"* in our civilisation, he also qualified this by saying that *"only the adventurous can understand the greatness of the past"* (Whitehead, 1933). In that case we should understand the title of this Congress to mean 'How can we exhort the illiterate of any ethnic inheritance to become adventurous enough so as to share and participate in the best that our civilisation has achieved?' The point is that the illiterate person can neither participate in the best that society has achieved, nor can he realise the best that he himself potentially has so as to share it with the World unless he is able to effectively use Logos as a symbol for an Idea. Culture, in other words is in terms of great Ideas. Technology helps the communication of ideas but it cannot do away with language: it presupposes it. To be in communion with Ideas, despite our contemporary technology, still means reading, writing and speaking a language well. All told, to be able to participate in culture and intensify the greatness of the self as a person means being literate.

Yet the subject for my discourse today does centre on technology in the World; it centres particularly on how technology can persuade or lure people towards culture. Specifically it centres on one important aspect of it, namely, computers. The discourse will focus on the application of computers to help resolve two distinct problems for both the literacy teacher and his student alike in the special case where, first, the literacy learner does not know or understand very well the language spoken by his teacher, and second, that the student is also illiterate in his own mother tongue. I will call this type of student the 'language-literacy' learner. The point of this discourse will be that the literacy teacher can use a computer to help him address many areas of the double handicap of his language-literacy learner, namely illiteracy and native language deficiency. I will be paying particular attention to the fact that many literacy teachers often have to work with limited resources.

My discourse stems directly from my experiences in teaching Adult Basic Education to students who were in fact doubly handicapped in this way. The students in Basic Education at James Lyng Adult Education Centre come from many countries, and most of them have had some grade school education allowing them to at least read and write in their own mother tongue. However, we do also get those who for whatever reason have not learned basic reading and writing skills in their native countries particularly refugees from war torn countries in Asia and northern Africa. Some of these latter do not even utter meaningful sounds that the teacher can understand. It is very difficult to teach older people who cannot read or write and who at the same time cannot speak the language that the teacher understands. But even those who have some degree of literacy but who cannot understand the language of the teacher are not easy to teach either. Fortunately, learning seems to work in an exponential manner in so far as the more one learns the more one is able to learn. In this way, the more literate the person is, the easier it is for him to perfect his literacy and master another language.

I. The Andragogical Problem

Because the language-literacy learner has two distinct handicaps the teacher clearly has to work on realising two different goals. He must teach what is now known as literacy and he also must teach what for all intents and purposes is a secondary language, and in my particular instance it has been ESL. This does not mean that both are incompatible; it simply means that the teacher must teach separate disciplines that have a different emphasis of subject matter. Teaching literacy means teaching the syntactical and semantic rules for the symbolisation of ideas through our alphabetic code. People who are illiterate do not have a good grasp of the rules of language. Also, we are all familiar with the practical facets of teaching literacy, namely that teaching literacy also involves teaching such things as arithmetic and mathematics as well as some social skills. ESL, on the other hand focuses mainly on the spoken word, and it presupposes a certain degree of literacy, at least for the practical purposes of classroom instruction. To speak a language, of course, also means a knowledge of the rules of semantics and syntax but to a lesser degree than literacy entails. A spoken communication, albeit rudimentary, is still possible without a good grasp of these rules. Pig

English works to some degree, although there is little precision or nuances expressible through it. Culture often requires a grasping of tacit ideas that because of their elusiveness language itself only barely reveals through its nuances. That is to say, language does not merely convey facts but it has to stir the soul. Thus, both grammar and meaning, or correct language usage, are common between both literacy and ESL, the former focusing on the printed word, while the latter on the spoken. In this way, literacy requires a greater emphasis upon the rules of language, while ESL emphasises vocabulary building. The question that each teacher must address in this situation, then, is how to teach both literacy and ESL effectively without either overwhelming the student or the teacher alike when two difficult disciplines are to be taught.

I would also like to mention here that because most language-literacy learners are new immigrants to this country, there is often another problem that the literacy teacher has to deal with. This is the question of values. Many immigrants will not be familiar with the dominant value orders that our Canadian society in general has. Nor will they be entirely familiar with the customs and social activities that these value orders shape. As a result, they will tend to abide with people of their own customs, ethos and of course language, for this is the milieu where they are most comfortable in. I am sure each one of us knows of older new-Canadians who have been living in our country for 50 years or more and who are still unable to read and write both in our and their own native tongues while at the same time being unable to understand any one of the official languages of Canada. They are greatly isolated from our society in general. They are usually at a great disadvantage in many spheres of society, lacking the conceptual framework that knowing how to read and write engenders. How to get these people into our classes is another problem, but I cite these examples to point out how urgent it is to do so and of the great responsibility the teacher has when they do appear in his classroom. I mention all of this because these people are not the usual literacy learners that normal literacy programmes cater to.

Conversely, the teacher too may be unfamiliar with the value order that the foreign language-literacy learner carries with him. The learner must not become too bored in his class, for all your efforts may prove futile if he decides to quit. But boredom stems from the degree of value and not from mere fact. Interest indicates the presence of value for someone, and it is imperative that this interest be intensified or stimulated in the learner. But this does not necessarily mean learning through playing games in order to make learning 'fun'. It usually does mean variety, however. I mention this at the outset because there has been a trend in recent years to make learning fun through playing games. It is generally conceded that one learns more when there is fun or enjoyment in the process. As true as this may be, it does not mean that playing games is the only way to make learning enjoyable. Enjoyment occurs in the realisation of value. There is a difference between a literacy learner arriving from a country where accomplishment through hard work is very valuable and therefore likely in itself to be enjoyable than possibly one coming from North America where mindless fun is often regarded as valuable for its own sake. My experience at James Lyng Adult Education Centre has been somewhat negative in applying the method of playing games in the classroom particularly to male learners from Asia and the Middle East. I do not wish to over-generalise but only to point out that there is no hard rule or method that applies to everyone equally; the value hierarchy of each individual person must be considered. Variety has been the key to success; this is a variety in method and content which in the long run accommodates everyone's interests.

When faced with a foreign language-literacy learner in the classroom, the question of method or approach, therefore, becomes somewhat problematic. The Herculean task in all of this is that the teacher must address the whole person but he can do very little until the student begins to speak or understand the language of the teacher. This, therefore is where one can start. The teacher can start at teaching the spoken language, but he must inevitably include reading and writing along with the loose semantics and the more rigid syntax that language contains. Thus, although both conversation as a means of learning a language and basic reading and writing skills need to be taught, there should be an emphasis on the spoken word first. This means that literacy teachers teaching language-literacy students should have a good background in secondary language instruction such as TESL.

II. Formulating a Solution

I propose that computers can be used effectively to help teachers of foreign language literacy learners to achieve their classroom goals. However, I must state at the outset that computers are secondary to the classroom instruction given by the immediacy of the teacher-learner contact. They are meant to reinforce what is learned in class, and not be the source of the instruction itself. By this I mean that the computer is a different way of approaching a subject matter so as to provide a variety in the activities in the classroom. What comes first, therefore, is the subject matter dealt with in the classroom.

Computers do have their own idiosyncrasies that regular classroom teaching cannot provide and these should be used to advantage. Of these I can point out at least four:

1. Anyone who has ever used computers will acknowledge that not only at the beginning but for a considerable time thereafter, there is something almost analgesic that attracts the attention of the computer user. One is reminded here of Martin Heidegger's warning to mankind about the danger of technology in so far as it makes us forget who we are, what we are doing and where we are going (Heidegger, 1977). If you want an example of man's forgetfulness of Being, just watch someone working on the computer. There may be something mysterious about the computer, but this effect of luring and keeping a learner's attention towards it can be used to intensify a learner's interest on some of the more important classroom instruction.

2. If one were to inquire what would be the most desirable student-teacher ratio, it would be either one to one, or even a higher ratio of teachers to students. The learner proceeds at his own pace, and the machine corrects his mistakes. Computers, in other words, can be very interactive, giving an immediate feedback to the learner. That the learner advances at his own pace is very important, because it is here that he is able to learn without being forced to put aside some matters so as to move on to others in the available class time. Only when the learner is stuck in his understanding of some point does the teacher find his true role. In this way the learner will be able to learn the required material before proceeding to another stage.

3. In order to use the standard computer of today, the use of the keyboard and reading the feedback on the video screen is required. This has a quadruple blessing for the language-literacy learner: it forces him to learn the alphabet, compose words and sentences, become familiar with the operation of the computer its keyboard and screen for future employment opportunities, and it gives him a self-confidence in the face of our technological World. Indeed, with the keyboard, you don't need to know how to physically write the letters which can be a difficult task for some learners; you

recognise them on the keyboard. This means that a written communication can ensue with the literacy learner, even before he has learned how to compose letters on paper.

4. There are different kinds of programmes for the computer and each provides its own set of variety to stimulate particular skills. If we look at computers to help us tackle the problems of the language-literacy learner, there are several considerations to be taken. On the one hand, programmes that teach a secondary language such as ESL are needed, and on the other, pure literacy programmes are needed. Children's programmes may not be suitable for the adult learner just as we should be careful with the standard three anathemae in these programmes: sex, religion, or politics.

III. The Solution

There are several classifications of computer programmes that can be made for helping teach language-literacy learners. Unfortunately, there are very few programmes specifically designed for this purpose, so we must look at the available software to see if and to what extent it fits our needs. I would like to go through some of the more important ones. I am not so much concerned about particular names as I am with types or categories. I will try to give you an example from each and guide you to where you could look to find more. Let us start with some of the more familiar ones.

Word Processors

Word processors are computer programmes that allow you to compose and edit text usually for the final purpose of obtaining a printout on paper. One can delete and insert words, sentences and paragraphs, or move them around very freely. There are many word processors, particularly as shareware. For a language-literacy learner a word processor can provide a familiarisation of keyboard, the alphabet, punctuation, and numbers recognition. Simple activities like writing the alphabet many times for practice, or typing dictated words when the language-literacy learner has advanced somewhat are effective. Spelling checkers often come with word processors and these may be useful too. Saving the learner's work onto a disk for future use also has its advantages because he can return to it at a later time. Also the teacher can correct his work at his own convenience. All these activities can indeed be done with paper and pencil, but the computer can provide a needed variety in the classroom. The main advantage with the word processor is that it introduces the learner to technology, and teaches him how to control it for his own use.

Grammar Checkers

Grammar checkers are used in conjunction with word processors to inspect written text for grammar errors and suggest possible improvements or corrections. Most of the grammar checkers today are highly configurable which means that you can select the type of writing style it is to check such as business, letter, academic, etc., the kinds of grammar rules to check for and so forth. They will pick up simple faults such as using the wrong tense, the wrong word, or comment on the complexity of the text for the average reader. They often give a school grade level for the writing, which may not be desirable. I have not had good results using grammar checkers with language-literacy learners because these learners tend to make too many errors for a meaningful checking. Also, the feedback is usually too complicated for the student to understand or read. It is, however, useful for more advanced students, particularly for advanced pure literacy learners where it can be used for simple sentences. For myself, I find them somewhat unreliable. The more recent versions require a computer with plenty of hard disk space which may not be available.

Authoring Software

Authoring software are programmes which allow the teacher to compose his own activities on the computer for interaction with the learner. In terms of course strategy this is the best type of software, since it allows the computer activities to be a part of the overall teaching strategy. The drawback is that the teacher must spend the time preparing these activities. This can take a long time depending of the type of software and activity, but it can be reused with future classes. In my experience, however, very few teachers have been determined enough to make this commitment. Of these there are many types including close, crossword puzzles, word games, hypertext information, fill-in the blanks, choose the correct answer and so forth. My best advice is to get your hands on an authoring system, and devote the time to it. Customised computer activities are priceless.

Games

There are a fair number of word games available on shareware, but most word games are too difficult for the language-literacy learner, particularly the anagrams and cryptograms. There are some games in which the teacher can add his own words. When looking for a word game you should look for things like whether the level of difficulty the type of vocabulary are selectable.

You may want to concentrate on particular words such as prepositions. Other games that are not designed as word games as such can be useful, but their level of difficulty usually precludes their use for the language-literacy learner. We have had great success with programmes that have a lot of graphics content. The problem is that not all computers have graphics cards. If you have the hardware, look for graphics (visual) intensive programmes.

Children's Games

If they don't mind the childlike flavour, children's computer games can be immensely useful. They are usually very visual but require graphics boards on the computer. For beginner language students, the visual is important and there are quite a few commercial games available and many of them are good at least as starters. They are, however, designed for children so their content is usually a lot less than ideal.

ESL Programmes

There are not many ESL programmes around, because of our location on the world. Everyone in North America is expected to speak English, so the market for those that don't is quite small. There are some, particularly for grade school level and high school.

Mathematics Programmes

Literacy students usually also have difficulty with numbers as well as words. There are many programmes for this ranging from simple arithmetic to complex calculus. Most commercial programmes are okay. There are numerous math programmes in shareware. Most Math programmes require graphics boards on the computer.

Devoted Software

There is very little software written for the foreign language learner. Ideally, such software should be part of a lesson plan where conversation is taught first, and the computer would reinforce what was done in class. Because the visual approach has generally been successful in teaching English language skills, it is desirable to complement this visual approach of the classroom with similar material on the computer. Since not all computers are equipped for graphics, text mode should be available. Generally speaking, there are several criteria that should be met by this type of software. The first is versatility. It should be able to perform many types of activities such as close tests, fill the blanks, choose the correct answers, type in sentences for the answer, as well as be a practice for the Alphabet, words, sentences, punctuation, while at the same time provide an automatic correction of the student's answers so as to provide a means for the student to progress at his own pace.

IV. Observations and Conclusion

At James Lyng, we have been using computers for a number of years, with great success. We also found that using a computer an administrative benefit: You can see immediately the level of the learner once he becomes acquainted with the keyboard which only takes a few minutes; it tests his knowledge of the alphabet and vocabulary as well as acquired reasoning. It can help you determine whether or not the language student is illiterate in his own mother tongue and to what degree, as well as distinguish him from someone who is intellectually 'slow'.

Foreign language-literacy learners appreciate the immediate feedback from the computer, at their own pace. They often start at a very slow pace so be patient because getting up to speed takes a long time. Repetition or rote work does seem to work at this level. Variety is important and using the computer for work already covered in the classroom is in itself provides a variety. In fact breaking the classroom routine is what computers should be used for. Computers are a great asset but they cannot replace the teacher. They are a teacher's aide.

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COMPUTERS AND LITERACY

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(RECLAIM)

Computers and Literacy

There is evidence to indicate that the use of the computer as a teaching *tool* is very effective. It provides: privacy, feedback, control and flexibility.

Deciding what the student does on the computer is of paramount importance. Priority must be given to those programs that place the computer in the role of tool. Word processors, authoring and problem solving games fit into such a category. The following are some comments concerning the interplay among the attributes of the computer as a teaching tool.

1. The computer is a powerful writing tool. By means of what are called "word processing programs" students are enabled to create their work on screen, usually with more ease than with pen or pencil. Word processing programs provide for: a) ease of editing text through deletions and insertions; b) a method of establishing and altering the layout and organization of the text (the presentation); c) a method for the printing and storing of the writing.

2. These very facilities of the word processing programs enable the user in turn to be more self critical because of the ease with which changes and adjustments can be made. In addition, because of the element of privacy referred to at the outset, the student is also more willing to be constructively critical of his work. Moreover, the printed word distances the individual from his writing, thereby improving his ability to edit his work more dispassionately. For example, because the ease of editing on the computer does away with the drudgery usually associated with it: a topic like punctuation becomes of real interest and hence writing itself becomes more valued.

Perhaps most important of all, the computers make students active rather than passive consumers of the written work because of the ease and speed with which both writing and graphics are printed out. This transfer of control to the learner is empowering, providing access to the means of production, thereby increasing his likelihood for success.

RECLAIM Learning Centre

On September 6th 1991, RECLAIM Learning Centre was opened by the Hon. Gerry Weiner, M.P. as a computer centre specifically for use by literacy students. The Centre is sponsored by the P.S.B.G.M. which provides the space located in the High School of Montreal, The St. Andrew's Society and the P.S.B.G.M. which donated computers, and other sponsors which include Paramax Electronics Inc. and the Post Office.

The philosophy of the RECLAIM Learning Centre is to encourage and promote learning using computers. The Centre is run for the students, and learning is based on the student's own needs and abilities. Every student *can* learn, whether it be computer skills, reading skills or writing skills, and here, at the RECLAIM Learning Centre, they can learn in an atmosphere of acceptance and cooperation. Learning is based on the student's self-esteem and ability to think. Emphasis is placed on writing to improve literacy skills. Moreover, writing is empowering. There is nothing quite like the magic of making words appear at the end of your fingers.

The Centre is "manned" by two animators who see to the smooth running of the Centre, and the maintaining of the equipment and programs.

The Centre presently houses 15 IBM compatible computers, eight of which have hard disks. The advantage of having different computer configurations is that students can learn that the principles of using a computer are the same, no matter the set-up. It is rather like driving a car, whether if be Volkswagen or Pontiac, the method is the same.

Students learn the routine very quickly. Each student is asked to sign a daily attendance sheet and a student record sheet. This gives a record of daily attendance, and each student a record of his/her attendance. The student then picks up his/her disk and sits down at a computer. Disks are alphabetically filed, and if the odd "D" disk is to be found in the "R"s, this is part of the learning process. The student may then select from a menu the program he wishes to use, and proceed to write on his own or with the help and assistance of the animators and tutors.

New students are usually "hooked" by making a letterhead, calendar or card using the graphic program called "Print Shop". Some of our students are very adept at this program, and have learned how to edit the graphics, and how to create their own designs. This is a particularly easy program to learn, and the students often help each other as they are learning it.

Bank Street Writer is the student's introduction to the world of word-processing. Menu, file, clear, retrieve, save... the list of vocabulary and new processes are learned and practised. The majority of students are also learning keyboarding. The use of the space bar, escape key, directional arrows and shift key are soon mastered by the majority of students.

Levels of abilities and aptitudes vary widely, so a student with little or no reading ability may be quite content to copy out a list of words, while another student may write a lengthy story. Students are encouraged to participate in projects. Recent projects include a student newsletter, and the creation of a book of personal messages of farewell written to a much-loved teacher who is moving. There is no compulsion to participate, and some students are quite content to "do their own thing."

A few students excel in the role of tutors working with their peers. Indeed the animators and tutors encourage the students to take an active interest in, and take responsibility for, their overall learning.

Tutors attend the Centre, giving their time and help to the students. A particular mention must be made of the students from the McGill Literacy Council, who have been found to be excellent tutors, willing, helpful, understanding and supportive. These tutors help the students to learn, by advice, suggestion and explanation.

In conclusion, the RECLAIM Learning Centre provides an alternative approach to literacy by allowing students to develop new skills in a supportive environment, regardless of the level of ability and aptitude of the student. In the short time the Centre has been open, there has been a noticeable increase in self-esteem and confidence of particular students, who have mastered certain programs and become experts among their peers. As the Centre evolves, and teaching methods alter and develop along with the students, it can be seen that the application of computers in literacy is only in its infancy.

Programs

Bank Street Writer Plus (Broderbund Software)
Battle Chess (Interplay)
Childrens' Writing & Publishing Centre (The Learning Company)
Crossword Magic (Mindscope)
Grammar Gremlins (Davidson & Associates)
MathBlaster (Davidson & Associates)
* Midnight Rescue (The Learning Company)
Monsters & Make Believe (Pelican (Queue)
Once Upon a Time (Compu-Teach)
Print Shop (Broderbund Software)
* Scrabble (Leisure Genius (Virgin Mastertronics)
Typing Tutor (Simon & Schuster)
Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego (Broderbund Software)
Wizard of Words (Advanced Ideas)
Word Attack (Davidson & Associates)
* WordPerfect 5.0 (WordPerfect Corporation)

The above programs, except for those marked by an asterisk, can all be found in the catalogue of School Services of Canada, 66 Portland Street, Toronto, Ontario M5V 2M8. The catalogue can be ordered by calling toll-free 1-800-387-2084. Fax (416) 366-0908.

HUMAN RIGHTS LITERACY

FREEDOM BEHIND BARS: SYNOPSIS OF PRESENTATION

Cecile Herskowitz and Sheila Leger
Toronto Jail, Toronto

The Education Program at the Toronto Jail originated in 1975 with the Volunteer Coordinator, Gwen Heffernan. It was called a reading program then and there were four active volunteers: one of whom continues to tutor weekly.

For a very long time,the Provincial School Authority ran educational programs in several provincial institutions, however, in 1984, the Ministry of Solicitor General and Correction Services (MSGCS) decided to approach various Boards of Education across the province to provide educational services in all provincial correctional facilities. The increased focus on literacy and government spending had to be addressed. This appeared to be a partial solution because now the Ministry could indicate to the public they were spending less, and the Boards could tell the public they were promoting literacy.

The Toronto Board was approached by MSGCS to provide paid instructors to facilitate education at the Toronto Jail. The emphasis was to be placed on literacy and upgrading. So, in 1985, we were hired to implement a program to include the following: assess students, design individual programs, train volunteers, keep attendance registers, order supplies, report to the board, and teach! All of this was to be accomplished within security guidelines and our allotted time of 10 hours per week each.

Believe it or not, the right two women were hired. We immediately rolled up our sleeves, put on our boots and jumped right in. Seeing our great enthusiasm, the board rewarded us over the next three years by increasing our work week from the original 10 hours each to 13, 28, and finally full time. We receive a very small yearly monetary allotment from the board with which to purchase texts, while MSGCS provides the necessary everyday supplies like paper, pencils, erasers, pens, and photocopying. The MSGCS has been most generous to us over the years both with financial and moral support.

Our immediate mandate was to establish ourselves as part of the scenery to let people on both sides of the bars know who we are and what we do. The goal of MSGCS for jails and detention centres is to hold people securely but humanely. Most of the time we come under the humane part.

Because of the physical limitations of the jail, there are very few activities in which inmates can participate, and even fewer opportunities for inmates to release tension. We have a small outdoor concrete exercise yard, and one program room for a maximum of 20 people. There is no library, no classrooms, no gyms, or activity rooms which means the inmates live in each other's pockets 24 hours a day. We mobilized to convince the correctional on-line staff of the value of the program because we realized that if an inmate is constructively occupied, he will make fewer demands on the staff.

As a result, we spent many hours talking to correctional officers about our function and what we were trying to do. We ensured that the staff's cooperation was rewarded with thank you's, by recognition, and even treats.Because the nature of the on-line staff is shift work, we frequently encountered staff whom we hadn't met who would question our presence and our access to security areas. Management assisted us greatly by letting us participate in the training of new officers. Now all new staff meets us during their first week of training and learns about how well they can help. They come to realize that our role in the institution is impartial. THIS was a major obstacle we overcame. Now many of the correctional staff refer inmates to us whom they feel could use our assistance.

Having convinced the staff and management at the jail that we were a necessary evil, so to speak, we then set out to meet potential students. We called it *blitzing*. We travelled throughout the institution together laughing and tap dancing with our tongues. You can imagine how intimidating it was at the beginning for two middle class, middle-aged, sweet females to enter an all male adult institution. Soon a common greeting on the range was "teacher up". In our blitzing sessions we gathered names of potential students, and made tentative appointments with them for an educational interview. This assessment continues to be done informally, in an interview room on a one to one basis. Here the student is made to feel comfortable in a non-threatening situation. Since no others are present to eavesdrop, some level of privacy is reached and fears, frustrations and perceived inadequacies can all be disclosed. Once the student feels comfortable, progress can be made and his program can be implemented. Learners are assessed for one of three programs, although many areas overlap.

We teach a) literacy and upgrading including numeracy, b) ESL, and c) secondary school credit courses.

Let us explain our literacy and upgrading first. The Toronto Board of Education defines a person as being functionally illiterate if he has less than an 8.9 grade level. This means that a person who attended grade nine but did not earn any credits is functionally illiterate.

In our literacy and upgrading program , we operate on a student centred basis. The work must be relevant and meaningful to each person or he won't attend school very long. Life skills such as making change, using public transport,and filling out forms are an integral part of these lessons. Many of these men are not only non readers and non writers, but also they are unaware of basic life functions that many of us take for granted: knowing 5 pennies equals a nickel, lack of personal hygiene habits, using a dictionary, following simple directions or instructions, and social skills.

Consequently, our student determines what he wants to learn and together we decide how best he can achieve success while in custody. He sets his own speed and direction, while we try to guide him and provide successes along the way.

A growing multicultural population in the community translates to a mirror image within jails as well. Many of these ESL people in jail become more isolated when they cannot somehow communicate to an officer a medical or food allergy, feeling sick, or a need to contact someone somewhere else. They come from all over the world and may or may not have oral, written or reading skills in English. The very worst scenario is if the person is illiterate in his mother tongue, for this person will have no sense of language patterns, rhythms, and structure. Some ESL students have attended community based classes upon arrival in Canada, but the majority have not. For this inmate population we have devised the following: during the first few sessions, conversation is stressed and we focus on pronunciation of common English vocabulary. Topics for discussion include those familiar to everyone: family members, body parts, and food. From this point, we can move into some written English and begin the process of introducing grammar.

A most sought after goal for many is the OSSD, the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Our Ministry of Education offers a wide variety of correspondence courses at the secondary school level to accommodate those capable of more independent study. To ensure that the student meets the requirements, an official high school transcript is requested. The Freedom of Information Act necessitates this be done in writing. The time between request and response is not wasted because we either put them into an upgrading program or enrol them into a course that would probably not have been duplicated. If we waited for absolute proof of everything, nothing would ever get accomplished. Summer is a prime example when main offices close and records are unavailable. We have sent requests to many countries much to the surprise of the inmate.

Whichever program our students select, none would be successful without our battalion of dedicated volunteers. Potential tutors are recruited by the MSGCS through the Coordinator of Volunteers, G Heffernan. Sometimes we get tutors from the Toronto Board of Education as well. If they meet the Ministry's criteria, then they undergo a minimum training period of five sessions. Appropriate dress, language and behaviour are stressed as essential. The training consists of an in depth interview between ourselves and an individual prospective tutor. At this first meeting we establish procedures for supervision, emphasize the adherence to institutional regulations and explain timetables for their tutoring sessions. It is mandatory for tutors to understand from the start that their only purpose is to teach. Digression from this role will result in immediate dismissal from the program. Dismissals have occurred.

During the next two training sessions, the tutor is assigned to either one of us. He or she then accompanies us into the institution to observe us in action in a typical teaching situation. As mentioned before, we have no classroom, and so we use the small interview rooms found on each landing for our one-to-one teaching. All materials to be used are carried with us. The Toronto/Don Jail encompasses two buildings: the old "Don", built in 1862, and the Toronto Jail, built in 1957. The Social Services Department that we are part of, occupies the main floor area of the old Don while the inmates are housed in the newer building next door. What we can carry is what they get. EDUCATION = TEACHERS' FITNESS

During the last two training sessions, the volunteer does the tutoring assisted if necessary by either of us. Usually, these training sessions are sufficient, but fewer or more may be required. We are flexible. Here in no particular order are some techniques we encourage our tutors to use.

1. don't be patronizing - offer friendship, honest praise and encouragement
2. stay simple ,but include variety - if the student doesn't understand it's up to the tutor to find another method or explanation - never assume he is unable to learn
3. be flexible
4. cut no from your vocabulary, if possible
5. respect what the student knows and build from this
6. be careful of overkill
7. let the student progress at his own pace
8. encourage independence

Fortunately, we have many resources at our disposal to accommodate our students' learning styles, levels and needs. Here are a few.

The BLADE Program

BLADE stands for Basic Literacy for Adult Development. It is a completely individualized remedial reading, writing, and speaking program designed to bring reading skills up to almost the functional level. Illiterates use this program successfully because they can improve from a zero literacy level to approximately a grade five literacy level. Booklets, audio cassette tapes, exercises and end tests are used. All the materials are adult in context and the program is directed toward success. The instructor has an important role in the learning process, not as the giver of information, but as a guide and encourager for the student.

Language Experience

The language experience approach is by far the most relevant to our students. Here the student is encouraged to discuss a favourite topic, a familiar game, or a fond memory with his tutor. If he is unable to write, or has limited language ability, the tutor copies down exactly what the student says. The student tells the whole story to the tutor before dictation begins. The story should be about three or four sentences long. The story as dictated with obvious errors included becomes the text for future lessons. These lessons might include tracing over the words, copying underneath the tutor's work, spelling context words, recognizing verb tenses, sequencing, and other specific grammar areas.

These two processes take considerable time and we most often do not have that luxury, but we make the best of the situation.

Phonics

Phonics is universal and for our ESL and older students it is more familiar and therefore comforting. Students frequently know the names of letters, but not the sounds these letters make. Phonics is also a comfort to some of our tutors since this is what they know best.

Also, to assist our students complete some courses, we have invented some useful tools and found ways for some equipment to be allowed in our maximum security institution. Examples to be shown and discussed.

Into each lesson a life skill must fall! Often what the student is really requesting is something he is unaware of. If he doesn't know what he doesn't know, how can he ask for what he needs? So we go from the known to the unknown with each inmate. For example, a student has a quarter, knows the phone number, but can't get the pay phone to work. What is wrong? One fellow told us he never realized he had to lift the receiver before depositing his money. Without that frustration, he would never have thought to ask and likewise, we would have presumed that he knew this. Trust is that important.

On the average, inmates remain in custody with us for 22 days, but in many cases, some inmates stay a longer time, whereas others may disappear after one meeting. We try to provide some follow-up when they leave our institution. If they stay in the correctional system, then we contact the receiving institution especially if the inmate is exceptional. Exceptional in our terms means extremely low in skills and in need of every bit of help or on the verge of achieving his high school graduation diploma and needs the final assistance for that. We network and liaise most frequently with several provincial institutions. If they leave the system, we provide them with as much information about the educational opportunities available for them in their home communities, but there is little feedback for us here.

PRESUMED TO UNDERSTAND: LITERACY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

(An Inquiry Into the Relevance and Impact of a Literacy Sensitization Project) [1]

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The Revolving Door Syndrome

Limited literacy is a problem for the country, but it is also a particular difficulty for people coming in conflict with the law.

In Canada, about 190,000 persons are sentenced to various correctional services in any given year; there are about 13,000 inmates in the 62 federal correctional institutions and about 7,000 parolees and offenders on mandatory supervision. [2] Between 60% to 70% of the offender population suffers from illiteracy and literacy handicaps.[3] A high rate of limited literacy skills is of concern for several reasons. First, so many people go through so many social and justice agencies before reaching prison, without their literacy handicap being detected and addressed. A second reason is the implications on rehabilitation planning and programming: about 40% of federal inmates have served previous sentences in federal penitentiaries. Recidivism is a problem. (4) Reduced recidivism is related to three major interrelated factors: strong nurturing personal and family relationships, experience of employment, high degree of self-esteem.

The Research

Persons who have come in conflict with the law constitute one group in a number of groups marginalized in Canadian society and literacy is one of the handicaps suffered by these groups. However, the John Howard Society of Canada views literacy as an essential tool which citizens require as a matter of right, to allow them to grow to their fullest human potential and to fully participate in a democratic society. The John Howard Society of Canada is a non-profit organization devoted to reform in the criminal justice sector and the promotion of community involvement with concrete solutions.[5]

In 1990, the John Howard Society of Canada studied, within its own organization[6] and with selected actors in the justice system[7], the issue of sensitivity to clients with limited literacy skills. [8] Results were published in the three-volume National Literacy Project Report.[9] The John Howard Society of Canada has produced "Taking Down the Wall of Words", a set of two booklets for general distribution.[10] The immediate objective was to sensitize community agencies to the issue of limited literacy and encourage them to adapt their operations to better accommodate their clients with limited literacy skills. The ultimate intention was to contribute to the improvement of societal conditions and hence to the reduction of criminal behaviour.

In the Autumn of 1991, the John Howard Society of Canada requested and received funds from the National Literacy Secretariat to evaluate the impact of these booklets and to continue the study of the justice sector with respect to the issue of limited literacy.[11] This paper focuses on the first part of this project (the evaluative study) which took place in the Spring and Summer of 1992. It is based on the findings perceived by the authors to be most relevant to individuals and agencies involved in the field of literacy.[12]

The main purpose of this study was to determine who had received the "Taking Down the Wall of Words" booklets, what use had been made of the information contained in them, and to ascertain what impact they had on community agencies. The study also revealed the respondents' perception of the quality of the booklets.

In the planning stage of the study, it was anticipated that the process of gathering information would regenerate an interest in the booklets in particular and for the literacy issue in general.[13]

A questionnaire tapping 27 variables was mailed to 791 individuals and organizations to whom the booklets had been sent either directly by the John Howard Society of Canada or through other national agencies.[14]

The Findings

Impact

A majority of respondents reported that the booklets had an impact on their agency. The nature of the impact was mainly staff sensitization, changes in the design of promotional material, signs in reception room or other public areas. Familiarity with the contents of the booklets was found to be prerequisite for the perception of its usefulness.

Quality of contents

Those who attributed an impact to the booklets generally praised them as an "excellent resource", "informative", "well written", "meaningful" and felt that they "induce[d] change". Even those who stated that the booklets had no impact on their agency agreed that they were an "excellent resource" and "informative". Actually, only two respondents commented negatively on the booklets. The consensus, however, does not explain the absence of impact among those respondents both familiar with and positive about the booklets.

Pressures on agencies

When the "impact" variable is correlated with the type of agency, an interesting pattern emerges: social service agencies are found to report the least impact. Social service agencies also report the lowest degree of familiarity with the contents of the booklets, are more likely than any other type to possess no other source of literacy documentation and less likely to have shared the information with other members of their own organization.

A close analysis of the reasons given by social service agencies for the absence of impact of the booklets on their organizations reveals the factor most often invoked: "too busy doing program delivery".

In that program delivery and strained budgets are weighing heavily on the social service sector, it appears that this is the type of organization with the least amount of disposable time for keeping abreast of the global picture and for introducing changes prescribed by literacy literature. Unfortunately, social service agencies may also be the type of organization with the highest rates of clients with limited literacy skills and the type of organization that would benefit most from literacy initiatives such as "Taking Down the Wall of Words".

Pressures on agencies seem to reduce the awareness of new tools and therefore the likelihood that these tools have an impact on the organization.

Sensitivity to issues

Literacy agencies, expected to be most highly sensitized to the issue of limited literacy skills, were the least likely to report the booklets as their first or only source of literacy documentation, but very likely to be familiar with their contents. Literacy agencies also showed the highest rate of sharing the booklets with others outside their organization and reported the second-highest rate of impact of the booklets within their own organization.

When members of an organization are already sensitized to the issue of literacy, there seems to be a greater likelihood that they will familiarize themselves with new tools and eventually report an impact if the new tool is positively evaluated.

Some respondents reported that limited literacy skills were not a problem for their clientèle. This was difficult to believe when the agency was, for instance, the Big Brothers, who have for direct clients mostly children from socially disadvantaged, single parents. Understandably, these respondents were least likely to report an impact of the booklets.

Distribution channels

When considering how the booklets have come to the attention of the respondents, we find some modest differences and some important ones in the level of familiarity with the contents and impact of the booklets.

Those who first learned about the booklets through the mail reported an impact much less often than those who requested the booklets after reading a non-literacy publication. This is consistent with the fact that those who learned about the booklets from non-literacy publications are also the most familiar with their contents. This reinforces the belief that the more active the role of a person in getting an instrument, the greater the likelihood that this instrument will be perceived to have an impact on the agency.

Regenerating Interest

Personalized questionnaires were mailed to people to whom the booklets had already been sent, based on the records available. The cover page showed the picture of the two booklets in question and asked: "Do you remember these?" About one third of the respondents answered negatively and over 20% (including some who were already familiar with the booklets) asked for copies.

This is a good indication that the questionnaire did generate an interest from respondents who did not remember getting a copy of "Taking Down the Wall of Words" and did regenerate some interest from those who were already familiar. Some comments made by respondents also suggest that the whole exercise may also have contributed to increase the sensitivity of some key actors in community agencies to the issue of limited literacy skills.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that it is possible to map the relationships between several of the variables included in the study. The impact of "Taking Down the Wall of Words" appears directly related to the positive evaluation of the booklets, which of course presupposes some familiarity with their contents. The familiarity of respondents with the contents is itself influenced by selected characteristics of the organization: pressures and sensitization. Furthermore, the mode of distribution of the documents affects their probable impact and a follow-up questionnaire may regenerate an interest in them.

Literacy documentation is a product. We argue that, like its commercial counterparts, several components must be present if the product is to have an impact on the target group: First, it has to be a quality product and be perceived as such. When an organization undertakes a literacy initiative (such as producing the "Taking Down the Wall of Words" booklets), it naturally tends to believe that its product is of a good quality. It may or may not be. It is only through an evaluation by the users that the organization will be able to tell with confidence that the tool is valuable. An evaluation procedure should be a built-in element of any project.

Second, it has to reach and be noticed by the target group. There are many ways to reach a target group. This study suggests that the more personal the contact with the user, the greater the likelihood that the document will be read or the product be used. The familiarity with the contents seems indeed greater when prospective users have actively solicited the product. Unsolicited materials may easily get lost in the shuffle. It is also important to reach the right persons in the targeted agencies. Upper management has the power to initiate changes based on the contents of the product and disseminate information within the agency. However, front line staff are often the actual users of the product and without their active support, the product may have little impact. After the material has been delivered to users, a follow-up procedure is a useful way to generate or regenerate the interest of the target group in the product. Of course, this requires keeping track of who gets copies!

Third, it has to be perceived as relevant by the target group: The relevance of a literacy-related product is more easily perceived by agencies already sensitized to the issue of limited literacy skills. Fact sheets, showing potential users the ways in which the issue concerns their clients, may increase the likelihood that the product be perceived as relevant and then used.

Fourth, it has to be perceived as a credible resource by the target group. Many respondents reported that "Taking Down the Wall of Words" added to their knowledge. The study reveals that an impact of the product may often be reported even though other related products may be available to an agency. A quality product may be positively evaluated in comparison to other available materials. The presence of complementary products may increase the credibility of additional materials and thus generate a cumulative impact.

Fifth, it has to be circulated both within the organization and outside. The impact of an instrument is enhanced when more people know about it. Circulation inside and outside an agency must be encouraged. Users must feel confident about lending copies of the instrument, giving it away, or procuring additional copies. If the product is available free of charge, this should be mentioned strategically on the material, with the appropriate address, telephone and fax numbers.

Remaining on the Agenda

Building upon the results reported in the paper, the second phase of the project will examine with actors in the judicial system the specific literacy-related needs of people coming in conflict with the law, at different stages: charging, trial, and sentencing.

The short-term objective is to come up with instruments to enable the system to adequately address the needs identified. The longer-term objective is to give more equal opportunities to all Canadians.

Expecting that society provide its members with equal opportunities (including literacy skills) is a matter of right. This issue must remain on the agenda. If anything is politically correct, this is.

Endnotes

1. This is an abridged version of the paper delivered at the Conference.
2. Correctional Service of Canada, Basic Facts About Corrections In Canada, Ottawa, 1990, passim.
3. Personal communication with the authors.
4. Basic Facts About Corrections In Canada, p. 21.
5. There are approximately 60 local John Howard Societies (also called chapters) across the country.
6. Canadian Bar Association, Reading the Legal Word: Literacy and Justice in Canada (Canadian Bar Association Task Force Report), Ottawa, 1992.
7. Correctional staff in the federal institutions, ex-offenders, inmates, and staff in selected literacy organizations.
8. This initial survey was to determine how the John Howard Societies were currently addressing the literacy needs of their clients and what sensitization efforts and linkages with the literacy network were needed with respect to literacy program delivery. A total of 426 interviews were conducted.
9. Kim Pate, National Literacy Project Report, John Howard Society of Canada, Ottawa, 1990.
10. The John Howard Society of Canada also supported the production of a video called The Other Prison. The booklets are available, free of charge, from the John Howard Society of Canada, 55 Parkdale Ave., Ottawa, Ont. K1Y 1E5.
11. Results of the second part of the project are expected to be available in the Spring of 1993.
12. See Susan McDougall-Gagnon-Gingras, "Literacy and Criminal Justice: Awareness and Impact of Selected Instruments", John Howard Society of Canada, Ottawa, September 1992, 50 pp.
13. The first fact-seeking research carried on in 1990 had generated an interest for the issue among the local John Howard Societies. See Susan McDougall-Gagnon and François-Pierre Gingras, "Non-Profit Organizations and Social Policy Issues: A Model of Success", paper delivered to the Annual Meetings of the Canadian Political Science Association, Learned Societies Conference, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, June, 1991.
14. English or French versions of the questionnaire were sent, as appropriate.

GENERAL

INTEGRATING NUMERACY INTO THE LITERACY CURRICULUM

Tom Ciancone
Toronto, Ont.

The Need for Numeracy Instruction

When I asked one of my students why she wanted to study math, she said, "When I go shopping, I want to know when people cheat me." Numeracy has been defined by Cockcroft (1982) as "an ability to cope confidently with the mathematical demands of everyday life." So when a person in our society lacks this ability, she or he is belong cheated everyday. Numeracy is a basic need and everyone has the right to have it.

Not much hard research has been done in Canada in the area of adult numeracy, but there are some relevant statistics that we can garner from the 1989 Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities (National Literacy Secretariat, 1990). The survey consisted of interviews administered to individuals in their homes and involved a series of tasks designed to test reading, writing and numeracy abilities with respect to activities commonly encountered in daily life in Canada. The following results come from a sample of 9,500 persons aged 16 to 69:

> 62% Canadians who have the numeracy skills sufficient to handle the numerical tasks normally encountered in every day life.
>
> 24% Canadians who can deal with commonly encountered documents and forms requiring them to perform simple numerical operations such as addition or subtraction.
>
> 14% Canadians who have very limited numeracy abilities which enable them to, at roost, locate and recognize numbers in isolation or in short texts.
>
> Further analysis showed that the 12% of adult Canadians with lowest reading skills also have limited numeracy skills.

These statistics, taken at face value, point to a serious problem of innumeracy among adult Canadians. Furthermore, my own personal experience and that of my many colleagues working in adult basic education suggest that provision of numeracy instruction with an appropriate methodology is a compelling need.

Mathematics as a Communication Skill

Mathematics is not a language but it is a tool of communication. The ability to use this tool provides a person the opportunity to express facts, opinions and to analyze things in the real world. Knowing how to calculate percentages, for example, is necessary for discount shopping and for understanding statistics on unemployment or free trade. For an adult to acquire math skills is not necessarily an easy task. "The power, and difficulty, of mathematics lie in its abstract nature and the fact that, unlike language, much of it is not used continuously in everyday life" (Penney, 1984:22).

To convey the abstract concept, mathematics uses a code. The code of mathematics, its symbols and operations, form part of our English language. This code is not as flexible as a language, with its dialects and slang, because it must be standardized so that everyone can understand it. For example, "2+2=4" is almost universally understood.

In spite of its universality, the code of mathematics must be learned through a language. Among other things, a student's weakness in numeracy may be based on his/her limitation in using language. For this reason, it can be beneficial for a learner to work at acquiring numeracy and literacy skills together.

Toward a Numeracy Methodology

In developing a methodology for numeracy instruction, we must consider the nature of mathematics learning, as we began to explore above, but also the nature of the adult learner. Determining appropriate instructional methods will depend both on the learner's current mathematical skills and on his or her attitude towards the use of mathematics. Traditionally mathematics has been taught as a linear process with each of the four operations presented separately. From this approach, learners develop mechanical skills, but may lack the ability to name what they are doing, to estimate answers, to decide which operation Is needed or to apply the skills in daily life.

In a more learner-centred setting, literacy instructors often use a functional approach by choosing themes such as budgeting, shopping, recipes or travel. While avoiding the boredom of traditional math, this approach runs the risk that gaps in mathematical understanding are missed in the absence of a structure. In *A Sequencing Guide for Numeracy: Whole Numbers* (Lucas, Dondertman & Ciancone, 1991), we propose a spiral approach for numeracy instruction which provides a framework for skill-building while addressing students' immediate needs.

Whatever approach we use, it must start with the learner's present knowledge and build from there. There should be a balance between functional needs and skill-building. The learner should be encouraged to continually make connections between the mathematical operations themselves and the applications in daily life. Since the world of mathematics has all kinds of games and puzzles, a numeracy lesson can also be fun.

Facilitating Numeracy

"Literacy instructors are ideally suited to facilitate numeracy activities. They know how to integrate real life situations into the content of their teaching, and they have the experience in working with students of varying backgrounds and skill levels. The attitudes of the instructor as well as the atmosphere in the classroom can encourage learners to address their numeracy needs in the context of their literacy needs. Through participatory activities, instructors and students can become comfortable with numbers. In fact, the experience in facilitating literacy that instructors bring to their practice is vital in bridging the gap between literacy and mathematics" (Lucas, Dondertman & Ciancone, 1991).

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LITERACY IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY A NEW CHALLENGE FOR ADULT EDUCATION

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Preface

Since Portfolios are so new to the field of Adult Literacy, the workshop was designed as an exchange of ideas and experiences rather than a presentation by experts. We are grateful to the two women, A. Belanger and J. Bilodeau, from our program who came with us and added their testimonials.

Introduction (M.J. Fear)

The use of portfolios in the Youth sector is developing rapidly and is demonstrating the value of this tool for both learning and assessment. In the Adult sector, it is essential to develop viable evaluation techniques which do not damage the students' fragile self-esteem but which will reflect to both the student and the teacher, the progress towards mastery of basic literacy skills.

The idea of using portfolios was appealing to us because of our belief that adults coming into the program must be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and assessment of their progress. Our aim is to assist the student increase his/her self confidence as a learner, improve his/her critical thinking as well as improve the facility with basic reading, writing and arithmetic. The discovery of portfolios provided a tool that could support the work towards our goals.

The introduction of portfolios needs to be done carefully; first with the teachers, of course, then with the students. Everyone needs to be clear about the purposes and the ownership of the portfolios. They belong to the student but are kept in the classroom in the filing cabinet which is unlocked during class hours. The classes have been encouraged to work out the details of how to handle this new addition to their program and to evaluate it as we learn to use it.

Each teacher has reported different experiences as can be seen in the following brief interventions from them. Hopefully, future conferences will give teachers more opportunities to have exchanges on this topic.

M. Allard

In the portfolios for my class we have included two initial evaluations which will make a reference point for the student as the year goes along. They were done on English (mother tongue) and Mathematics. In each case the observations and comments of the teacher were recorded for the student to read. Often the student discovered he/she knew more than expected.

Leila Atkin

We began to use portfolios as a tool to enable students to analyze and to evaluate their writing and progress. The idea of the Portfolio is that each student can place whatever material he/she considers worth keeping in the file. The material is private and nothing which is put in will be criticized, nor will the choice of what the student puts in be judged by the teacher.

The portfolios are organized in an informal fashion. First it is determined that the student will choose what is to be entered in the folder and then it is decided where to keep the folders. In our class the students keep their portfolios in the filing cabinet. A designated person in the class collects any entries and files them, or each student can file any material whenever he/she wished. Everyone tries to include at least one journal entry each week.

In addition each person writes the reason an article is chosen, so that he/she will begin to evaluate his/her own decisions. By saying why they have chosen a particular essay, the students must analyze, be conscious of their work and make decisions. This decision making builds self-esteem. The journal is a way of communicating, whereas the portfolio goes a step further by saying, "Yes, what I have to say is right, good and worth keeping".

The portfolio also enables the teacher and the student to review the portfolio and to evaluate the progress made over a period of time. Many students and teachers are surprised to find how much progress has been made as they look through all the material.

Through their portfolios the students are able to see their thoughts and development, just as if they were geodes, opened to reveal the beautiful crystals inside. e

Barbara Elliot

The process of evaluating literacy students is especially delicate considering their damaged self-esteem. It appears necessary to avoid traditional, formal testing methods since they were not successful in the past and emphasize a student's feeling of previous failure. Students like to see tangible progress and appreciate having that progress noticed.

Portfolios include student input and a student assumes the responsibility for his/her portfolio by actively selecting suitable material for it. Materials might be any of the following: crossword puzzles, wonderword puzzles, poems, journal entries, brainstorming maps, personal dictionaries, arithmetic assignments, questionnaires of a self-evaluating nature, virtually anything that gives them a sense of accomplishments and that can be referred to in the future.

It is expected that such a collection will make progress more obvious to the student as well as facilitating assessment and planning by the teacher.

C. Lynch

In our class we have established a method of setting up the portfolios that would help the student maintain order in the record of their work. At the beginning of the folder the students were sown how to set up an index so that they would be able to know what they had saved. Each item that was to be put into the portfolio then had to have a title, a date and be filed in order. While no marking by the teacher has been done, the students have been encouraged to go through the process of selecting the best of their work for inclusion in their personal portfolio.

T. Montague

Student portfolios can be extremely useful tools in developing intrapersonal and interpersonal awareness in adults. Students can participate in determining what types of activities they would like to include in their portfolios. General assignments can be designated for the portfolio as well as special individual projects. In essence, the portfolio can be filled with the individual's unique experiences and critical opinions. Even more important, especially for the self-esteem of the literacy student, concrete steps towards student aspirations can be visualized through writings, poems and other portfolio activities. In conclusion, the use of the portfolio is only as limited as the imagination of the involved students and teachers.

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AFTER ILLITERACY, THEN WHAT

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Literacy surveys (Southam Communications, 1987; Statistics Canada, 1990) continue to inform us that adult illiteracy is a problem in Canada. Educators and public opinion makers provide us with a list of ill effects arising from illiteracy. Researchers present us with information on the nature of illiterates, their life stories, the conditions and causes of illiteracy. SunTeys (Calamai, 1988) tell us that very few of those classed as illiterate express interest in enroling in literacy programs and of those who do enrol, the drop-out rate, which is more likely to occur in the first half of the program, range from 30 to 50 percent (Calamai, 1988; Hunter and Harman, 1979; Rigg and Kazemek, 1983). Rigg and Kazemek suggest that one reason for this high attrition rate is that the programs do not meet the needs of the adult learners. Thistlewaite advises that literacy programs must be based on a knowledge of the *"general characteristics of adult learners, specifically as they apply to reading (and writing)"* (Thistlewaite, 1983).

It seems that sufficient attention has been paid to the "who" and the "why" of illiteracy. Focus must now be placed on providing for effective literacy instruction.

Program Development On the one hand, the task of program development seems rather simple. Adults participate in literacy programs and need to acquire a certain degree of literacy skills/ information in order to attain their particular goals. On the other hand, the task becomes complicated when policy makers and program instructors get bogged down in deciding which needs should be met, which skills/information should be taught, and which method is best suited to enhancing learning.

Most adult literacy learners enter literacy programs with a long term commitment (at least a year) rather than wishing to complete a short term task such as being able to read a landlord-tenant lease. They want to develop competency in reading and writing so that they can eventually get a high school diploma, help their children with their school work, or engage in a variety of literacy tasks. Their need is of a more general kind and the challenge for the program instructor is to provide a balance between andragogy on one hand, and pedagogy on the other; instructors must provide for participation and decision making by the learners versus determining what and how the learners should be taught; they should assist the learners in engaging in the processes of language versus focusing on mastering language skills; they must understand literacy as the means of empowerment rather than being synonymous with it; they must help the learners to become independent learners taking control over their own learning and their goals.

Adult literacy learners do not learn best in a school oriented context reminiscent of their school days as children. Since general literacy skills based programs resemble school programs in terms of content, literacy instructors often find it difficult to provide for learner participation. The program to be described in the following section illustrates how participation in a general literacy skills based program is possible.

An Effective Literacy Program

The organization, implementation, and content of an effective literacy program is described by Fagan (1992a). This program was devised based on research on achieving and low achieving school-age children, and on two groups of low illiterate adults. It was initially implemented by the author with a group of adult learners and with a group of low achieving inner city junior high school students.

The overall organization of the program is expressed as an acronym L-I-T-E-R-A-T-E: Literacy Independence Towards Enabling, Responsibility, Attainment, Trust, and Excellence.

Literacy independence is defined as competency in reading and writing, and oral language, and the use of this knowledge in coping with reading and writing tasks and oral language situations. Such competency should *Enable* individuals to read and write in a variety of situations or contexts. Literacy independence is rarely achieved by the adult learners becoming dependent on the program and the instructor. On the contrary, learners must become *Responsible* for their own learning as far as possible. This includes not only engaging in reading and writing tasks on their own outside of the Program, but also their behaviour within a class situation in deciding when and how learning is in/effective. *Attainment* refers to that part of the Program where specific individual needs are provided for. These may range from wanting to write a cheque, write a letter, or complete an income tax form. Math skills may also be desired to be retained by the learners and provision would be made to include math activities in the Program. *Trust* must be bidirectional. The learners must trust in themselves that they can become independent literacy users; they must also trust that the program provided for them is the best possible program. On the other hand, the instructor must trust in the participants as learners, and must trust in him/herself to offer the best possible program. The ultimate goal or outcome is that of *Excellence*, which is simply defined as a satisfaction for the attainment of one's goals. Implementing the Program

The program is implemented in four phases: Pre-Entry, Entry, Active and Evaluative.

The literacy instructor has two main tasks during the Pre-Entry phase. The instructor must understand him/herself as a person and as an instructor. A questionnaire is provided for this purpose. The second task is to provide a program that is balanced in terms of the nature of the reading and writing tasks. The program draws on tasks and activities from five focuses: (a) strategies within text, (b) strategies for text, (c) activities related to text, (d) activities extending text, and (e) enjoyment of text. There is also a balance between reading and writing within these tasks.

Strategies within text involve becoming familiar with word meaning, word structure, interword relationships, etc. *Strategies for text* include developing a larger perspective of text such as understanding the purpose/goal for reading/writing, the use of background knowledge or prior information, and recognizing and using various genres. *Activities related to text* focus on support knowledge or skills which is not developed within a written text. An activity of this sort would entail vocabulary building through discussion and questioning. *Activities extending text* involve exposing the learners to a wide range of reading and writing tasks that may be found in many contexts and used for a variety of functions. Finally, *enjoyment of text* refers simply to the adult learners reading and writing or pleasure and without constraints. The program provides a detailed account of 63 main activities and 65 supplementary activities which are coded according to the five focuses.

During the Entry phase, the main goal of the instructor is to get to know the learners. Questionnaires are also provided for this purpose and help the instructor empathize with the learners.

The Active phase brings together the instructors and learners in a meaningful and productive learning and interpersonal environment. It is during this phase that the goals of enabling, responsibility, attainment and trust are actualized.

A focal point of the Active phase is the methodology which the instructor employs in helping the learners become literacy independent.

Methodology

The specific methodology employed is referred to as learning with insight and control through interactive teaching (LIC:IT). In brief, the learners must be as involved as possible in their learning (with the assistance of the instructor when necessary) in understanding the requirements of the task and must be able to constantly monitor their learning progress and needs.

Since the specific methodology for the different tasks cannot be separated from the overall goals of the Program, eleven principles are presented which should guide the implementation of each task or activity. These eleven principles are:

1. Both instructor and learner should understand the rationale for the reading or writing task. The task (exercise, activity) should be meaningful in terms of the learner's reading and writing needs.
2. Both instructor and learner should be aware of the objective (the WHAT) and whether it is knowledge/skills or strategy based.
3. Both instructor and learners (within reason) should understand HOW learning takes places.
4. Interactive behaviour must be focused on developing insight and control.
5. Instructors should become aware of learners' auditory and visual strengths. Some learners learn best through the auditory mode and some learn best through the visual mode, while others learn equally well by either mode.
6. Learners must be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning.
7. The knowledge/skill or strategy being developed must always be presented in a text and/or context of

reading or writing.

8. The instructor should "keep on track". This means the instructor must avoid referring to information of which the learner is unaware, and avoid making irrelevant or aside comments.
9. The instructor should give positive and appropriate feedback.
10. The instructor must make provision for transfer of learning to related tasks.
11. The instructor must be a skilled and knowledgeable observer.

Monitoring Literacy Performance

The final phase of implementation is the Evaluative Phase. Although this is mentioned last, it does not mean that evaluation only takes place at the end of the program. Rather, evaluation is interactive with all other phases of the program.

Evaluation takes three focuses. There is provision for the instructors to evaluate their suitability as literacy instructors by developing a greater understanding of themselves and of how they understand learners. Instructors also evaluate the effectiveness of their interaction during instruction.

Evaluation, in terms of monitoring literacy performance is interactive with evaluating literacy instruction since the end product of evaluating literacy instruction provides a better understanding of learner needs. In addition, a companion text (Fagan, 1992b) provides a detailed description of various assessment and diagnostic tasks that may be used to monitor learner progress with respect to specific instructional strategies as well as providing benchmarks in terms of levels of literacy performance. Monitoring learning progress is also based on the principle of participation for it is through the learner's participation that insights can be made regarding the success or lack of success encountered with various instructional strategies.

Finally, evaluation must focus on effectiveness of program implementation including an understanding of why the program or parts of it are or are not successful. Instructors, like the learners, must also have control of and responsibility for their involvement in the program.

Conclusion

General literacy skills based programs for adult learners cannot be replications of school based programs, which adult learners usually remember as programs they failed. Literacy programs must provide a balance between developing competence in a certain body of skills and in allowing learners to participate in and take control over their learning. Evaluation must be interactive with program development. Through continual monitoring of literacy performance, program instructors can constantly adjust and change the program so that it better meets the needs of those central to the program. The learners.

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RECOMMENDATIONS DOCUMENT
from the
CONSULTATION ON LITERACY IN THE CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Introduction

The purpose of this consultation was to bring together literacy providers and representatives of cultural communities in the greater Montreal area. Their agenda was to identify gaps in services, support, and access to learning opportunities, and to explore a variety of ways in which providers could help these communities articuate plans and respond to identified needs.

This recommendations document articulates the concerns and the proposed courses of action of the various communities represented at this consultation.

Community Education Services of the Montreal Catholic School Commission was contracted by Concordia University to design and implement a consultation process in conjunction with their conference, "Dimensions of Literacy in a Multicultural Society," held at Concordia from October 2-4, 1992.

The following recommendation document is the final product of a lengthy consultation process conducted between September and December 1992 with representatives from numerous cultural communities in Montreal who spoke English. The process consisted of five stages:

1. Identification and recruitment of participants;

2. Information sharing on the range of issues involved in the Literacy dossier, held in small group sessions on September 22-25;

3. A full day pre-conference consultation which brought together the diverse cultural communities' participants to identify priority areas of concern and preliminary recommendations;

4. Participation in the main Concordia conference on Literacy held October 2-4; and

5. Two post-conference meetings to articulate final recommendations held on October 15 and November

The ad-hoc Steering Committee was established at the November 5th meeting to approve the final version of the Recommendation Document and to begin to develop a follow-up strategy. Much effort was made to reach and include a wide range of groups in the consultation process. Annex 1 outlines those individuals and group who were invited, and those who participated at various phases in the process. While the original intent was toinclude Native communities in the process, due to a lack of representation this document cannot be seen to reflect their particular interests and concerns in the area of literacy.

RECOMMENDATIONS DOCUMENT
Consultation on Literacy in Cultural Communities

I. UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO LITERACY PROGRAMS

Context

There is considerable concern with the fact that currently the government is setting conditions and criteria that restrict or limit access to literacy programs. Anyone who requires help should have access to it.

Recommendation

1. That the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec (M.E.Q.) ensure universal access to literacy programs for all people, regardless of academic achievements (i.e. high school graduates who still lack literacy skills or wish to upgrade). The required government funding must be made available.

II. PUBLIC AWARENESS/LITERACY INFORMATION

Context

A major difficulty expressed is the lack of knowledge regarding issues related to literacy both within the cultural communities and with the public at large. Mechanisms for networking among diverse cultural communities is lacking. It is important to clarify the needs and difficulties of the cultural communities and sensitize all sectors of society, i.e. government institutions, the private sector, Non-government Organizations (N.G.O.), etc. It is suggested that a pro-active approach, as opposed to re-active, would be more effective. It is also suggested that Partners in Literacy, Dawson Centre for Literacy, the Gazette, and other literacy organizations take a more active role in disseminating information to cultural communities.

Recommendations

1. Initiate a major information drive targeted to the cultural communities to increase awareness and use of existing resources. Core funding and resources must be made available for the establishment of a

permanent literacy information centre and hotline which could be a community-based project operated for and by the cultural communities. Objective: to network with other literacy organizations, cultural liaisons and resources.

2. That Montreal declares 1994 "Year of Literacy for Cultural Communities" (funding and media blitzes in partnership with cultural communities, public, para-public, and private sectors), to be launched in 1993 with the framework of 1993 Year of Racial Harmony ("Montréal en Harmonie").

3. Develop partnerships and mechanisms that provide and enhance cross-cultural and culturally sensitive approaches to literacy within all sectors of society, including teacher training.

III. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Context

Both public and private institutions and organizations have a vested interest in increased literacy; however, some institutions are not materially contributing (ex. business, banks). In addition, governments are not providing enough material resources, especially funding. Community groups are providing much volunteer labour; however, they require financial support in order to be more effective in their work.

Recommendations

1. A permanent literacy committee be established to examine problems of literacy and the needs of cultural communities. This committee should be comprised of: cultural communities, business, government, and other resource people (as needed) to promote input from all sectors.

2. Community organizations involved in literacy should be encouraged to participate in the "Partners in Literacy" coalition and urge participation from the corporate sector and the unions.

3. Concomitant with the communities increased volunteer efforts, governments and business must increase their commitment to funding, and support towards access to materials, coordination and training of volunteers.

IV. HUMAN RIGHTS

Context

There is a need for more information about what is available through the Quebec Human Rights Commission (QHRC), what the existing policies are, and how these policies are or may be enforced. It is felt that access to the information (i.e. means of filing a complaint and follow-up on enforcement) must be made more widely available (ex. storefront locations). Lodging complaints is a difficult process; the office is far from the communities,imposing and intimidating, and reaching a decision is far too lengthy a process. The QHRC should acknowledge and legitimize the human and organizational resources of the cultural communities.

Recommendation

1. Examine policies of the QHRC with the intention of making it more accessible. For example:

    a) that the QHRC make available the knowledge and the accessibility required;
    b) that the QHRC hold intensive orientation and training stages with minority community workers, who can then transmit this knowledge and information to their community groups.
    c) that the QHRC set up storefront locations to facilitate accessibility by the cultural communities.
    d) that the QHRC recognize and reflect in practice the human and organizational resources of the communities represented.

V. FUNCTIONAL LITERACY

Context

Some important aspects of functional literacy include:

a) being able to critically analyse that which is read;

b) being able to critically analyse the social and political structures within which people live;
c) other everyday life skills; and
d) empowerment potential of literacy skills.

There exists a need to deal more effectively with all youth dropouts, those in the school system (including Special Education classes) and in reception centres (Shawbridge, Youth Horizons), to enable them to be functionally literate. Parents and other adults have an important role to play in preventing illiteracy among their children; however, if the parents are not literate they are not able to prevent illiteracy. An attempt should be made to respond to adults who dropped out of school by offering programs in their mother tongue within their communities. Youth in reception centres require follow-up support programs to help prevent their return after discharge. They should also receive recognition (i.e. certificate) for participation in such follow-up functional literacy programs.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that M.E.Q. School Boards, community organizations and social services (i.e. youth protection) set up a support system as a proactive measure in partnership with cultural communities, to ensure that adults, and elementary and high school students have access to literacy training that facilitates academic success. (Community after school programs and the roles of volunteers and parents can be important assets to these support programs).

2. A program should be developed for drop-outs (15 to 18 years old), that would provide them with work experience and literacy skills (including life skills/anti-racism education/empowerment). This should be done in partnership with business, schools, community and government. The proposed involvement of each sector could be:

   - Business/Mentor/tutorial training programs.
   - Schools and universities/Provide expertise, facilities, human resources.

- Cultural communities/Provide advocacy, support, parent volunteers.
- Government/Provide accreditation and financial support.

3. Development of a two-phase literacy and lifeskills program for youth in reception centres:

   a) while in reception in partnership with cultural communities;
   b) a follow-up component within the community after discharge.

   This program should be developed, implemented, and followed in close collaboration with the diverse cultural communities.

VI. JOB TRAINING LITERACY

Context

Adding a literacy dimension to skill training was seen as a necessary for illiteracy prevention. The integration of workplace literacy in skill training programs should be in mother tongue (including English). Such a program should be longer than nine months, perhaps of two year duration. Business could be invited to participate: for example, on a weekly basis there could be three days job training/experience and two days literacy skill development within the community. The community-based aspect was seen as essential to the new program. The community should have responsibility and control over the program and receive the adequate government funds to support it. French (second language) skills was also seen as integral to such a program and to success in obtaining a job in Quebec. A community-based follow-up program is necessary to support young adults to stay in the workforce, in their continued schooling, and/or in keeping them connected to the community.

Recommendations

1. Cultural communities should be give the support necessary to address workplace and, by extension, mother tongue literacy within their communities.

2. That a new program of job training be developed specifically for 15-18 year olds, combining skill training and literacy in partnership with community organizations. Follow-up should include continuing liaison with community organizations. Return to post-secondary education should be accepted as having a positive impact (in the long term) on insertion into the job market.

VII. MOTHER TONGUE/WELCOME CLASSES

Context

Ethnic mother tongue literacy, is an integral part of first language heritage, and should be encouraged in the classes d'accueil as a better means of integrating students into Quebec society. Mother tongue literacy has a direct impact on French (second language) literacy. Recognition of literacy needs for children under the age of 12, particularly by governments, and implementation of appropriate programming to address the needs, would represent a preventative approach. There is a need to address the difficulty, in community-based literacy programs, of adequately responding to the extremely diverse ethnic languages and cultures. "Cultural workers" from their own respective communities should be involved in the assessing of needs and making of recommendations.

Recommendations

That the M.E.Q. and School Boards expand welcoming classes to include:

1. a new structure which will respond adequately to the needs of immigrant children whose mother-tongue may not be French or English (bilingual education).

2. liaison with paid experts ("cultural workers") who can assess particular socio-emotional needs and learning disabilities of ethnic and racial minority children, and make recommendations for placement.

VIII. REMEDIAL LITERACY

Context
Existing remedial reading programs are not working. It is presently too unstructured, limited in focus, and leads to a high dropout rate. Students need to learn how to function in all subjects (ex. to read a math problem and be able to analyse it). Also, identification of those students weak in literacy skills is ineffective. Students needing help are left unidentified and this leads to an increase in the dropout rate. An in-school remedial literacy program should be combined with a community-based after-school program.

Recommendation

1. Remedial literacy programs should be set up within the school system in partnership with community-based literacy projects, and seek to involve the government, the business community, the cultural community organizations, school boards, etc., recognizing the legitimacy and expertise of community-based programs.

Annex I:

ORGANIZATIONS INVITED TO CONSULTATION PROCESS

Organization	Representative
Access	Gasha Christophe Masimango*
Armenian Community	Mrs. Balian
Association des Femmes Italienes	Mme Vaccaro
B.C.C.Q.	Edina Baynes*&
Black Board of Educators	Curtis George
Black Study Centre	Clarence Baynes
C.R.A.I.C.	Marisa Barth
Canada Manpower Center (Kahnawake)	Peter Paul
Canadian Polish Congress	Mr. Wolski
Carrefour Latino-Americain	Pierre Lessard
Centre d'aide Hispano-Americain	Carmen Casio
Centre international de documentation et information Haitienne, Carribénne et afro-Canadienne	Franz Voltaire*, Marie-Denise Douyon*
Centre Portugais de Référence et de Promotion Sociale	
Centre for Research Action on Race Relations	Fo Niemi
Chinese Family Services	Le Gna Phan*
Chinese Neighborhood Society	Bessie Tat*
Church of God	Jennifer Celestin*& Morene Clarke*
Commission des École Ukranien du Québec	Maria Bussieres
Corporation Culturelle Latino Americain de l'Amitie	Yolanda Maradiaga
Cree Language Commission	Diane Reed
Hellénique Community of Montreal	Mr. Maniakas*
Hellenic Federation of Parents/Guardians	Tselanis Stavros
Hellenic Ladies Society	Katerina Limberis*
Hungarian Community of Montreal	Mr. K. Corshish, Alex Domanyi
L'Institut Interculturel de Montréal	Jacques L'Anglais
Interculturalism Jerome Le Royer	Nick Furfaro*
Jamaican Association	Noel Alexander*

Organization	Representative
Jewish Educational Council	Ruth Najaman[•]
Jewish Immigration Aid Services	Tyra Moscovitch[•]
Kahnawake Economic Development Group	Ronald Abraira
Kahnawake Survival School	Alex McComber
Kativik School Board - Adult Education	Richard Page
League for Human Rights of B'Nai Brith	Steven Scheinberg
M.C.C.I. - Directions des Service à la collectivité	Janis-Marika Smith[•]
Montreal Korean United Church	Mr. Ko
N.A.C.O. India	Dr. David Daniel
National Council of Jewish Women	Lois Katnick[•]
Native Friendship Center	Ida Williams
P.S.B.G.M. - Multiculturalism	Denise Llewellyn, Eric Mansfield
Polish Community	Dr. Bajsarowicz
Romanian Centre	Dan Fornade[•]
Service d'intreprète et d'aide aux Indochine	Minh Lan Duong
South Asian Women's Association	Nilambri Ghai[•], Sadega Siddiqi[•]
Step by Step	Lynn Dickson Diabo[•], Darlee Goodleaf
Teacher, P.S.B.G.M.	Clifton Ruggles[•&]
Tekeyan Cultural Centre (Armenian)	Mrs. Nevart
Union United Church	Hazel Bigby[•]
United Hungarian Church	Mrs. Helen Nitsch
Westmount High School	Garvin Jeffer
Y.M.C.A. (Centre Ville)	Pascale Delgado[•&]
Y.M.C.A. (Pointe St. Charles)	Angela Eastwick[•]
Y.M. - Y.W.H.A.	Jeniffer Fefferman, Davida Strag
Y.W.C.A.	Julie Samuels[•]

[•] Participated in Consultation

[&] Steering Committee

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